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THE CHURCHMAN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

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BY

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"We shall not be satisfied with an open Bible. We shall strive to understand its contents to the last detail by the help of every light from every quarter. We shall read the Bible not simply to confirm opinions already formed, but to watch for new truths."—BISHOP WESTCOTT.

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PREFACE

THIS volume is intended primarily for the intelligent layman. It is hoped that it will prove helpful to him in two ways: by removing some of the difficulties which accompany the study of the Old Testament as a whole, and by rendering the several books comprised in it more easily comprehensible.

Every educated man who has reached middle age must be aware that certain views regarding the Old Testament writings which were almost unquestioned in his childhood are now regarded by many earnest and gifted Christian scholars as partially erroneous. He is dimly conscious that the latest results of science will not square with these views; that the word "inspiration" has to some extent changed its meaning; that modern methods of criticism do not always confirm what was formerly assumed concerning the dates and authors of the books of the Old Testament. He sees that the theory of evolution throws light not only upon the phenomena of the physical sciences but upon human life in all its departments, and he cannot but suspect that it ought to have a similar illuminating power when applied to religion. Too often the uneasy

consciousness of these facts prompts the man who is bent upon retaining his faith to one of two erroneous courses: either he maintains an unnatural separation between his secular and religious beliefs, or he steadily refuses to look at any form of knowledge which even seems to conflict with opinions in which he has been brought up. It is the purpose of the following pages to expose the unwisdom of such timidity; to show that if we set aside merely fantastic speculations and accept only what modern criticism has fairly established, the result is not loss but gain—a gain which may be thus summarised: innumerable difficulties inherent in the narrative under the old view are removed; the books gain in intelligibleness by being placed in their right historical setting; and, above all, the Divine economy of revelation, so to speak, is seen to possess a cohesion and an orderliness which were formerly lacking. This book is in no sense, then, an apology; it is a vindication.

Besides removing some of the difficulties which accompany the study of the Old Testament as a whole, it is hoped that these pages may make clear the meaning of the several books contained in it. It is to be feared that when the chapters from the prophets are read in Church, while the moral beauty of detached sentences is apparent to all, the general drift of the writer's meaning is perceived only by a few. Thanks partly to more accurate translations and partly to the fruitful labours of Oriental scholars this need no longer be the case. In order to understand the meaning of every obscure expression in the prophets it will still, of course, be necessary to consult commentaries, but it is

now possible in comparatively few words to make the general outline of any sacred writer's meaning fairly clear—as clear, let us say, as *In Memoriam* or *Sartor Resartus* would be to an intelligent reader on a first perusal.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the writer of this book makes no claim to original research, though of course his task has involved at every step the exercise of the critical faculty upon material supplied by others. If he does not express his indebtedness to particular authors it is because his indebtedness may almost be described as universal.

A. M. M.

November, 1901

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THE CHURCHMAN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

INSPIRATION

ANY attempt to deal fully with so large a subject as Inspiration in a single chapter of a book would be obviously absurd, even were the writer competent for such a task. And, in point of fact, the subject is one which at best can only be treated provisionally in a transition period such as our own. It is therefore purposed to do no more here than to indicate a few truths which must be borne in mind if the Old Testament is to be read intelligently.

I. *Revelation has been progressive; the evolutionary method is traceable in it as in all God's works.*

Analogy alone would almost justify us in assuming this. Modern science reinforces with overwhelming strength these two axioms, that God is one, and that "in Him is no variableness nor shadow made by turning"; and it is felt now, as never before, that the same characteristics must be impressed alike on things pertaining to the secular sphere and the spiritual sphere; that there must be a close correspondence between the laws of nature and the laws of grace; and that all the works of God, whether presented to us in the pages of a book, or in the objects of the physical world, or in the dispensations of Providence, must bear marks of a common

origin and traces of the same constructive hand. Now how did the physical world come into existence? By the gradual and orderly process known to us as Evolution. And how were all kinds of secular knowledge revealed to men? For these also, we must remember, come from God. The pagans held that Minerva was the goddess of learning, Apollo the god of poetry, and so forth; but we, who believe in one God omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, must believe that it was He who revealed the lower kinds of knowledge—painting, sculpture, poetry, the useful arts and sciences—every whit as truly as religion itself. By what process, then, was every other branch of knowledge revealed? We find each branch had its origin in very imperfect and defective notions of the subject; that its growth was gradual; that only after long ages has it approached its completion. So was it as regards art: first men made rough forms in stone and clay, bearing but slight resemblance to the things imitated, and only after ages had rolled away do we reach Phidias and perfection. So as regards painting: from the scratched figures found on the implements of the Stone Age on to Raphael and Turner. So as regards music: beginning with a reed, and ending with the violin and the grand organ; beginning with the monotonous intonation of the savage, and ending in the sonatas of Beethoven. So in respect to astronomy, chemistry, the useful arts—there is no exception. God's work, indeed, so far as we can judge, is always gradual. From the germ to the fruit; from the first gleams of consciousness in the infant to the wisdom of old age; from the faint stirrings of spring to the golden harvests of autumn; from the rude polity of the semi-barbarous tribe to the advanced civilisation of a powerful state—always we see that God's work is slow and progressive. A Minerva sprung perfect and fully armed from the brain of a Jove is to be found nowhere but in the dreams of pagan poets. The law of the whole universe is thus stated by Christ Himself: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." That God should not follow the same method in revealing religion to mankind is a supposition almost unthink-

able to those who have grasped the great Unity revealed alike by science and revelation.

And when we examine the actual contents of the Old Testament, we find exactly what analogy led us to expect. We have not, indeed, the earliest and rudest beginnings of religion—nothing analogous to the roughly scratched figures of the Stone Age—for the Bible gives us the history of religion only as it showed itself in Israel, and therefore only in its comparatively advanced stages; but still the slow development of morality from defective elements is distinctly traceable. It is only necessary to refer to the Old Testament treatment of such subjects as polygamy, divorce, and the conduct towards enemies to make this abundantly clear. And this view of the Scriptures is confirmed by what we read in the New Testament. Our Lord and His apostles did not in their teaching anticipate the results of modern science and biblical criticism; to have done so would have been foreign to their purpose, and it is not in accordance with the Divine economy to reveal supernaturally what men's faculties are capable of discovering for themselves. But they did what must have been far more startling to their contemporaries—they ran counter to the fanatical Bibliolatry of their time; they pointed out that the morality of the Old Testament was in some parts defective. St. Paul did not scruple to characterise certain portions of the Jewish Law as "weak and beggarly elements." Our Lord denounced as adultery what the Law of Moses expressly permitted and provided for, and He flatly contradicted what was said "by them of old time" with His authoritative "I say unto you." If He thus traversed what the Jews thought to be the most sacred part of the Old Testament—the very Law which Moses gave as Divine—we may be sure He would have had less compunction in dealing with some other parts of the Jewish Scripture. The progressive character of the Old Testament revelation is thus declared to us on the very highest authority, and when once we see that it pleased God to use the same gradual method in giving the knowledge of Himself as in giving the inferior forms of knowledge, we cease

to be surprised that the earlier Scriptures are sometimes defective, not only in what they omit, but in what they state. We should be surprised, in fact, if it were not so.

II. *The Old Testament is the product rather of a nation than of individuals.*

It is only true in a limited sense that God revealed religious truth to the men who wrote the Bible; it would be more correct to say that God revealed Himself to the *Hebrew race*, of whose history and literature the Old Testament is the record. If we kept this clearly in view it would obviate many difficulties. For example, because the Books of Chronicles are part of God's revelation, we assume that their author was directly and exclusively inspired to write them, and then we are startled to find that they contain errors and discrepancies. In reality, however, God revealed Himself in Israel's history rather than to the historians who recorded it; and if slight errors have crept into the narrative, as they will into the most carefully edited national annals, that does not greatly impair its value. Similarly, we must remember that God revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not to those who penned their biographies. The distinction is vital, and yet is constantly lost sight of. It is, perhaps, to emphasise the truth that the Bible scriptures are the product of a nation rather than of individuals, that the names of those who wrote them are involved in such obscurity. The greater part of the Old Testament, including the numerous historical books, is anonymous, and some of the names which have been traditionally attached to certain other of its writings are now by no means universally accepted. What can we say of the Psalter, which contains the work of many hands, but that it is the collection of the national religious poetry? What can we say of the Book of Proverbs but that it contains the pithy sayings current in the markets and bazaars of Palestine, coined for the most part by no one knows whom? In the prophets —whose writings are of the very highest spiritual value, and whose messages come straight from God—we have, it is true, examples of direct inspiration; but even their teachings have in some instances been collected by another hand than their

own, and thus are rather heliographed to us from Israel's history than sent direct by the writers themselves. In any case, the personal character of the prophetic writings should not disguise from us the indirect and national character of much else in the Old Testament. As God gave man Art mainly through the Greeks, and Law mainly through the Romans, so He gave us the infinitely higher gift of Religion mainly through the Hebrew race; and this aspect of revelation, if borne carefully in mind, will explain several phenomena which otherwise would perplex us.

III. *There is a purely human element in revelation; and what is human is fallible.*

As there is no definition of inspiration given in Holy Scripture, we can only form a knowledge of its character by a careful examination of its manifestations. And such an examination seems to show that while religious inspiration is infinitely higher in kind than what we mean by inspiration when we apply the word to other subjects, yet it is not dissimilar in its method of working and its limitations. It enhances but does not take the place of the normal faculties. It is found in different degrees of intensity in different men, and even in the same men at different times, just as the poetic faculty is. It is the Divine influence working in an obstinate medium which often impedes and sometimes distorts it. We may say of the Old Testament what Shelley said of life—it is "a dome of many-coloured glass" which "stains the white radiance of eternity"; only not merely does each writer give his own colour to the light which he transmits, but often he breaks it, refracts it, shuts it out at this point or that point altogether, because he is still a man, though an inspired one.

Again, inspiration does not guarantee him who possesses it against all error. Here also analogy may help us. When we say that Shakespeare surpassed all other men in *poetic* inspiration, what do we mean? Not that in dealing with disputed historical questions he was infallible, but that he had an incomparable eye for the *poetic* and *dramatic* elements of history.

His genius did not make him an authority upon botany or astronomy, it only inspired him to turn stars and flowers to the highest *poetic* uses conceivable. So the prophets were inspired in matters pertaining to God; they had a genius for religion. That would not enable them to know more about geology or palæontology than another, but it would ensure that in dealing with the subject-matter of science they would have as keen an eye for its religious aspect as Shakespeare, in dealing with history, had for the dramatic. In secular knowledge the inspired writers were often not at all in advance of their age, but they had religious truths to reveal which it "had not entered into the heart of man to conceive," and which God alone could have taught them. But how a belief in the absolute inerrancy of Scripture could have arisen it puzzles one to understand. To St. Paul evidently the doctrine of verbal inspiration was quite unknown. Sometimes he speaks in his own person: "Say I, not the Lord." It is still more remarkable that at other times he seems to be uncertain whether he speaks by direct inspiration or not; as, for instance, when advising widows to remain unmarried, he adds: "I think also that I have the Spirit of God." What we do not find in the New Testament we are not likely to find in the Old. Indeed, it is clear that before the Holy Spirit was sent forth in increased measure on the day of Pentecost, the merely human element played a larger part in revelation than afterwards. All the New Testament writers seem to be on the same lofty spiritual plane. But in the Old Testament there are mountains and valleys. The light, which is dazzling and pure in an Isaiah and an Ezekiel, shines murkily in some passages of the historical books, and even in some of the Psalms—as if obstructed by the opaqueness of earthy vessels. The presence of this varying human element must never be lost sight of if the Old Testament is either to be read with profit or to be defended without sophistry.

If the above proposition be borne in mind, the stock "difficulties" presented by the Old Testament will, for the most part, disappear. For example, we shall not feel called

upon to join the long list of apologists who have defended with fine-spun sophistries the cold-blooded act of the half-heathen Jael, who first invited her husband's ally into her tent, and then treacherously slew him. We shall feel that reverence for the Bible does not demand that! One may condemn the Roman law, which allowed a father to put his son to death, and still pronounce Roman law to have been the parent of all good legal codes. So one may condemn the act of Jael, and several other things recorded in the Bible, with seeming approval, and yet hold that the religion of Israel, even in its rudest times, contained the germ of all that is true in the highest form of religion. The presence of such passages has its use so long as we regard them in relation to the age that produced them. In the British Museum may here and there be seen some curious archaic sculptures—queer figures with big heads and small bodies and misproportioned limbs. He would not be a very wise person who suggested that these figures, because they are misshapen, should be carted away as rubbish. They are among the most valuable possessions of the museum; without them you could never understand the history of Greek art. They would only become mischievous if learned professors, following the example of some ingenious commentators, were to argue that big heads and small bodies are beautiful, and that to have both eyes on the same side of the nose is really better than the normal arrangement. A true theory of inspiration would enable us to see every biblical character in his right relation and in his true moral proportions; and until we do thus see them they are not instructive, but the reverse.

And, after all, those passages upon which are founded the stock "difficulties" of the Old Testament form but an insignificant proportion of the whole. Under any theory of inspiration, to let these interfere with the profit and pleasure to be derived from the sublime Hebrew Scriptures, would be as foolish as to refuse to walk in the light because there are spots in the sun. Dispute about it, or misunderstand it as we may, the Old Testament must ever remain to us, as to the first

generations of Christians, the Sacred Scriptures, which are "able to make us wise unto salvation," and which are profitable "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

THE expression "Higher Criticism" is used to denote those modern methods by which are determined the origin and dates of the documents comprised in the Scriptures, and the historical value which attaches to them. The title is an unsatisfactory one, but it is now firmly embedded in our language, and must be retained for lack of a better. The subject which it conjures up cannot be passed over in silence in any modern treatise on the Old Testament, but its treatment in a volume such as this must necessarily be brief and fragmentary. Theologians were the last to adopt those exact scientific methods of inquiry which during the last half-century have been so fruitful of result in almost every branch of research, and the final conclusions to which such methods must ultimately lead have not yet been arrived at. Sometimes on insufficient data theories have been based which can only be described as fantastic; with these the ordinary reader is not likely to concern himself. There are other theories which have the support of certain established facts, but which are disputed by men as well equipped in every way as those who defend them. As regards these, the best policy for students who are not specialists is to stand in the old paths until practical certainty has been attained. But when all that is dubious is eliminated, there remain certain solid results, which ought certainly to be placed in the possession of every devout reader of God's Word. These results in some instances contradict the traditional theories which have grown up around

the Bible; but the Bible itself they do not contradict, rather they do much to explain and elucidate it. They are therefore constructive, not destructive; they are the nuggets of gold which have been discovered after many "washings" among much dirt, and for these we are indebted to the patient investigations of many labourers during the best part of a century.

The pioneer of modern methods of criticism was a French physician, Jean Astruc (1684–1766), who in his seventieth year published anonymously a book on the origin of *Genesis*, in which he argued from the use of the two Divine names, Elohim and Jehovah, in different parts of the book, that Genesis was a compilation made up of a number of older documents. This discovery was epoch-making in the critical study of the Scriptures. The theory which thus owed its origin to the nimbleness of mind so characteristic of the French is indebted for its development to the plodding and analytic genius of the Germans. De Wette, in the beginning of last century, began to follow out the clue which Astruc had indicated, and he has been succeeded by such patient investigators as Vatke, Ewald, Reuss, Graff, Kuenen, Nöldeke, Wellhausen, and many others. Wellhausen's is perhaps the name most closely identified with the Higher Criticism, as he attempted to analyse the sources of the Old Testament much more minutely than his predecessors had done, and to assign dates to the composition of the original documents. The English exponents of the Higher Criticism, of whom Professors Driver and George Adam Smith may be named as representatives, are characterised by a sobriety and balance which is sometimes wanting in their German *confrères*. In their works the results arrived at after nearly a century of patient investigation may be studied free from the extravagance with which, in their original forms, they are sometimes alloyed. Professor Smith to this service has added yet another. He has shown—especially in his remarkable work on the Prophet Isaiah—that such results of the Higher Criticism not only involve no loss, but lend themselves to a more living and

practical exposition of the Scriptures than was possible under the traditional view.

So far as the composite character of the Pentateuch is concerned there is no longer any difference of opinion among competent critics. This is acknowledged even by Professor Hommel, whose book, bearing the sub-title *A Protest against the Modern School of Old Testament Criticism*, has been translated into English and published by the S.P.C.K. in the interests of theological conservatism. To deny the existence of these different sources, he says, "in the face of all that the study of the Old Testament has revealed during the last hundred years would carry us distinctly too far, and would be equivalent to cutting the Gordian knot in place of untying it." There is by no means the same agreement, however, as regards the analyses of other books of the Bible which have been attempted, and on the theories founded on these dissections the divergences are wider still. Of late, too, there has come into existence external evidence of a very direct and convincing kind in the shape of the monuments and tablets of ancient Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, which have been unearthed in great quantities, and are gradually being deciphered. The evidence of these new witnesses is only up to a certain point corroborative of the results of the Higher Criticism; beyond that point it is conservative, and seems to refute the theories of the more extreme critics just where they would have become really difficult to reconcile with the Faith. The evidence of archæology is, however, too lengthy for treatment here; it will be discussed in a chapter by itself.

The ordinary student of the Old Testament who has not had time or opportunity to study closely the writings of the "Higher Critics," or the controversies that have been waged round them, may perhaps be inclined to doubt whether any trustworthy results, such as have been alluded to, have yet really emerged. He sees that the upholders of the old views are just as numerous as those who proclaim the new, and he is credibly informed that scholars are to be found on the one side quite as learned as those on the other. He must

remember, however, that learning in itself will no more make a good critic than a good poet; the qualities requisite to fit a man to deal with the literary problems presented by the Old Testament are quite as definite and distinct as those comprised, let us say, in the artistic or the musical faculty, and without these learning will only darken counsel by words without knowledge. There is another fact which he will do well to remember. Modern writers who deal with biblical criticism may be divided into two classes, who have been aptly designated "Schoolmen" and "Scholars." The object of the one class is to vindicate a preconceived opinion, and that of the other to follow truth wherever it may lead. The "Schoolmen" set out with the belief that the retention of some threatened position is essential to the welfare of Christianity, and forthwith its defence becomes to them a sacred duty. To this duty they sometimes bring great erudition, a considerable power of exegesis, and a deeply devotional temper. But though the labours of these writers are in certain aspects admirable, and such as have enriched and edified the whole Church, yet it is clear that they cannot be safe guides in purely critical questions, the unbiassed judgment which is essential to the determination of such questions being obviously absent. The student who bears in mind the distinction between "Schoolman" and "Scholar," and who looks not only for learning but for distinct critical capacity in his guides, will find the present position of Old Testament criticism less bewildering than at first it seems.

The questions which may be looked upon as decided, even by those who do not profess to be experts, are those upon which, after long contest, an agreement has been arrived at by the ablest of the controversialists on both sides. An example will serve to explain what is meant. Franz Delitzsch was regarded by all European scholars as by far the ablest theologian of the conservative type. Both in learning and ability he greatly surpassed all other critics of the same school, and he was universally venerated for his deeply religious character. For the greater part of his life he combated the theory of

a "Second Isaiah," *i.e.* that the chapters xl. to lxvi. were the work of a later prophet living at the time of the Babylonian captivity. He defended the conservative position with a vigour and a skill that no one else could have rivalled, and however powerful were the arguments brought forward on the other side the cause was not lost so long as the great name of Delitzsch could be quoted in its support. Gradually, however, he was brought to see that truth was with his opponents. In 1881, when he was sixty-eight years of age, came the first intimation of this change, and in the fourth edition of his *Commentary*, published in 1889, he adopted throughout the modern critical views regarding Isaiah. The conversion of the great Evangelical critic is a more convincing proof of the truth of the later views on this particular question than volumes of skilful argument.

A similar testimony to the soundness of the conclusions of the Higher Critics—this time regarding the Book of Daniel—is to be found in the adherence to those views of Canon Gore and other members of the "Young Oxford School." The great defender of the traditional view was Dr. Pusey. Canon Gore was the Principal of Pusey House, which was founded to commemorate the life and perpetuate the work of the great leader whose name it bears. The Principal and those who worked with him must, by their training, have been biassed against the new criticism; and we may be sure they would depart with great reluctance from the views regarding Daniel, with which Dr. Pusey's name was identified, and which were held almost universally by the members of that party in the Church to which they were attached. When, therefore, Canon Gore and the able band of Oxford High Churchmen whom he represents acknowledged that the critical portion of Dr. Pusey's work had been refuted, it became clear that the old view was no longer defensible.

Yet another instance of this kind of evidence may be found in the recent writings of Professor Sayce, the great Oriental scholar and archæologist. Professor Sayce is a strong—one might almost say a passionate—opponent of the Higher Critics;

and of late years he seems to have devoted all his great learning and power of argument to the refutation of such of their conclusions as are still disputable. With this object he has recently issued two learned books, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments* and *Patriarchal Palestine*, both under the auspices of the S.P.C.K.; and in them he has done much to refute some of the wilder speculations of the critics which were in themselves dangerous to the faith. The professor, however, accepts such of the new views as are confirmed by his own special study, and seeing that he does this with obvious reluctance, we may well believe that in these we have the irreducible minimum of settled results of modern criticism. It may be interesting to see what these results are, so far as may be gathered from his work *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*.

(*a*) The Pentateuch is of a composite character, and some of its component parts were of comparatively late date.

(*b*) The Books of Chronicles and the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were compiled by one author, apparently in the fourth century B.C. As regards the Chronicles, "their unsupported statements must be received with caution." They constitute, in fact, a link between true history and Hagadah (*i.e.* traditional stories and legends with a religious purpose).

(*c*) The Book of Esther is an example of Jewish Hagadah. It is unhistorical and of late date.

(*d*) The views which have been arrived at by the Higher Criticism regarding the Book of Daniel are entirely confirmed by the evidence of the monuments.

(*e*) The story of Jonah was written, in its present form at least, much later than the days of Jonah, the son of Amittai (2 Kings xiv. 25).

(*f*) The "Second Isaiah" (Isaiah xl.–lxvi.) is not dealt with in this book, but its author apparently (see p. 486) accepts its later date.

It is certainly very remarkable to find such admissions in a work ostensibly written in opposition to the Higher Criticism, especially when it is remembered that the results tabulated above have been reached by a totally different process from that pursued by literary analysis, and are based upon monuments and inscriptions which were contemporary with the events they record, and so are entirely trustworthy. Whatever may have been Professor Sayce's intention, his books do as much to reinforce the more moderate conclusions of the Higher Criticism as to explode the fallacies of its more extreme and fanciful exponents.

From all that has been said, even the reader who has not studied for himself very deeply the recent controversies regarding biblical criticism will probably be convinced that the traditional views regarding the Old Testament cannot in all respects be retained. As regards the most sacred and valuable part of the Hebrew Scriptures—the Prophets—little that should be disquieting to the most conservative student has been discovered. In some cases we have been mistaken as to the authorship of a book or the dates at which it was written; but that leaves the spiritual value of the work unchanged, just as the literary value of Homer is unaffected by the controversies concerning its genesis and composition. As regards one or two of the minor semi-historic books, it is clear that what we have hitherto regarded as literal records of facts are really specimens of Hagadah, and must henceforth be read in a less prosaic spirit. Further, it has become evident that we must not claim inerrancy for the historical books of the Bible; while there is ample proof of their substantial accuracy, there is also evidence of occasional error. Their value to us lies not in any fancied inerrancy, but in the fact that they are the history of the people through whom came to us the Divine revelation. We must study and test and correct their records, just as we should that of any other ancient people, using to that end the faculties and means which God has provided.

On the whole, the results of the Higher Criticism, so far as they are practically indisputable, lend emphasis to the Christian

apostle's assertion that the Divine revelation was given "by divers portions and in divers manners"; they lead us to a clearer recognition of the human element in revelation; they bid us discriminate, and not expect the same degree of inspiration in all parts; but they do not detract from, rather they illustrate and revivify, the transcendental spiritual teachings of saints and prophets.

However composite the character of some of the sacred books of the Old Testament, however various the forms of literary activity it enshrines, and however many the recensions its various parts may have passed through, there is nothing in recent discoveries regarding it to make us doubt that in its pages we hear the voices of men with a Divine message, who spake "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," or that its canon has been formed under the shaping hand of an overruling Providence.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE ARCHÆOLOGISTS

THE spade of the excavator has been very busy during the last half-century unearthing the buried cities and temples of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt—empires which were so intimately connected not only with Israel, but, as we now know, with the nations which inhabited Canaan before the time of the Exodus. The records thus brought to light were actually contemporary with the events they relate, and they bring before us with wondrous vividness not only the history and politics, but the domestic details of the lives of these ancient peoples. Layard and his successors have recovered whole libraries of the imperishable clay records of Babylonia, and the labours of Egyptian explorers have been hardly less prolific of results. It is scarcely necessary to say that this enormous mass of material has not yet been all deciphered, much less assimilated, by the small band of scholars who are alone competent to deal with it. It is evident, too, to anyone reading the translations of any tablet or cylinder made by scholars working independently, that the mastery of these ancient languages is not yet perfect. Half a century at least must elapse before the pen overtakes the spade, and then possibly it will be found that here and there a document has been translated erroneously, or a question decided over-hastily. There can be no doubt, however, that in the material already dealt with the Assyriologists and Egyptologists are trustworthy in their main conclusions, even if they are liable to occasional error in detail, and already their discoveries completely transform popular conceptions regarding

the patriarchs and the period of Israel's settlement in Canaan, while indirectly they support the authenticity of just those records which, being farthest from us in point of time, have been most exposed to hostile criticism. It is impossible, of course, here to give even a brief summary of what has been accomplished, but one or two specimens will afford some idea of the indirect confirmation which the Old Testament receives from the labours of the archæologists.

Abraham and his Times.—From the Book of Genesis we learn that Abram was a Hebrew who lived in Ur of the Chaldees, in South Babylonia, and that from thence he started on those migrations which form the beginning of Israel's history. Till recently some critics were disposed to look upon this as pure romance, while others suggested that the patriarchs were Canaanitish saints whose legends the Israelites took over when they entered Palestine, adapting them to their own history. But how does the matter stand now? It has recently been clearly established by Professor Sayce, Professor Hommel, and others, that some time before the year 2,000 B.C. —for the chronology is not yet clearly established—a Hebrew dynasty from South Arabia reigned over Babylon, one member of which, Khammu-rabi, was perhaps the most powerful monarch that ever ruled in Babylonia.* The names of the members of this dynasty are Hebrew. "The words of which they are composed," says Professor Sayce, "and the Divine names which they contain, do not belong to the Assyrian and Babylonian language," and there exists, it appears, a tablet in which not only the original names are given, but their Assyrian equivalents. During the three hundred and five years that this dynasty was in power, moreover, a considerable number of Hebrews, bearing South Arabian names, were living in the country. This appears from examination of the

* The Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, were reigning over Egypt about the same time. These too were, like the Hebrews, Western Semites, which shows how powerful were the Semitic influences in the world during the centuries before and after Abraham.

contract tablets of the period. It was customary to mention the reigning king in each contract, and just as the legal deeds of the time of the Norman Conquest would, if preserved, have shown for the first time an unusual intermixture of Norman names among the Saxons, so the contract tablets at the time of the South Arabian kings bear witness to the fact that a large number of their countrymen were then resident among the pure Babylonish population. The presence of Abraham in Babylonia, therefore, at this particular time presents no difficulty. But this is not all. In contract tablets of this very period Professor Hommel has found the name Abram (Ab-ramu), and Mr. Pinches the name Jacob-el and Joseph-el (Ya'qub-ilu and Yasup-ilu), these being probably the full designations of the patriarchs, as at the period in which they lived the name of God, el, was a common prefix or affix to personal names.*

Not only, therefore, were there Hebrews resident in Babylonia at the time of the patriarchs, but we have contemporary evidence which tends to show that the names Abram, Jacob, and Joseph were then common. The initial improbabilities which some critics saw in the history of Abraham and his descendants have thus completely disappeared.

The Book of Genesis, again, tells us that Abram was called by God to detach himself from the Babylonian society, and the object was, presumably, that he might preserve intact his monotheistic belief. There has been a tendency to hint that the story credits Abraham with religious ideas which did not exist until many centuries later. Professor Hommel† has some interesting evidence to bring on this point which incidentally shows how much may be gleaned even from lists of names, if properly interrogated. The number of names that have come down to us inscribed on cylinders and tablets is enormous, and with extreme frequency the name of some god

* Compare Jephthah and Jiphthah-el (Joshua xix. 14).

† See the English translation of *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, by Professor Hommel (S.P.C.K.), a book deeply interesting as to its matter, and painfully confused and confusing as to its style and arrangement.

or goddess enters into their composition. Professor Hommel shows that pure Babylonian-Semitic names bear ample witness to the polytheism that was rife among them. Among many others he quotes the following deities as forming part of Babylonish nomenclature :—Sin, Rammun, Ishtar, Baca, Gula, Ea, Marduk, Anu, and Tammuz. In the names, however, of the South Arabian Hebrews no such idolatrous indications are discernible; instead, they are almost invariably compounded with the generic term ilu (el) = God. It is true they had become polytheists, for their inscriptions bear witness to the fact. They were probably being corrupted by their contact with Babylonia, but Professor Hommel seems amply justified in drawing from his material the conclusion that originally the Western Semites were pure monotheists. "If we consider," he says, "how frequently primitive ideas continue to persist in the personal names of any race this would seem to indicate that there must have been a time in the history of Arabia . . . when some higher form of devotion must have existed of a type which involuntarily reminds one of what we are told about Melchizedek. How deeply this monotheistic principle must have rooted itself in the hearts of this people from the earliest ages is proved by its having been able, in face of the growing encroachments of polytheism, to retain for so long an undisputed position in their appellations."

And this is not all the information about ancient Hebrew religion which Professor Hommel derives from his list of names. Not only did these contain usually the name of a Deity, but they predicated something about Him, *e.g.* Ili-azza, "My God is mighty"; Ili-saada, "My God is blessed"; Yahmi-ilu, "May God protect!" From a long list of such words, Professor Hommel shows that the belief of the South Arabian Hebrews was as follows: "The Deity gives men all things that are good; He blesses, protects, rescues, assists, and delivers; He is mighty, and shines with a pure radiance; He creates and preserves all things; is omniscient, just, sublime, and kingly; He increases and commands, and nevertheless He is gracious and merciful to all who approach Him as suppliants, even as a

father is to his children, and hearkens to the prayers of them that call upon Him and serve Him with awe." When we remember that Abraham was a member of a race that was formerly monotheistic and held such religious ideas as these, and that possibly the purer faith of an earlier time still survived in the "friend of God," it throws a wondrous light upon the call, and also upon the faith of his descendants. It is vain henceforth to urge that *Genesis* invests Abraham with religious ideas that did not exist till centuries after his time.

While speaking of the evidence afforded by personal names, another ingenious point made by Professor Hommel should be noted. According to *Scripture*, the predominant name of God in the time of Abraham was El; then in the time of Moses the ancient name of Ai or Yah was changed into Yahveh ("he who exists"*); when Canaan had been conquered, sacred history tells us that Baal and Astarte threatened to take the place of Jehovah; and finally the worship of the true God was firmly implanted. Professor Hommel points out that *every stage in this process is reflected in personal names.* In patriarchal times, as we have seen, the name Ilu (El) is found among the Hebrews almost exclusively. Then from the time of Moses the name Yahveh occupies a favourable place beside El. After the conquest of Canaan we find for the first time such names as Jerub-baal (Judges vii. 1), and Esh-baal (1 Chron. viii. 33), Merib-baal (1 Chron. viii. 34). And from the time when the Scriptures tell us that at last the worship of the true God prevailed, the current names testify to the same fact. David, indeed, had a son named Beel-iada, but the appellation was quickly altered to Eli-iada, and from that time onward Baal is seen no more in the nomenclature of Israel. Not even an apostate king like Ahab dare resuscitate the evil of thus honouring the false god; instead there is the growing use of words compounded with Jo and Jeho (from Yahveh),

* Professor Hommel insists that the Scripture explanation of Yahveh is the right one. Ai or Yah was compounded by Moses with the ancient Hebrew (Arabic) verb *hawaza* = "to exist," the imperfect, or rather present of which is Yahvi = "he exists."

and Yah, such as Joath, Jehoram, Adonijah. All these points concerning names seem very subtle, perhaps, but it is just their subtlety which constitutes their strength. If they were obvious, they might have been forged for a purpose; as it is they belong to that class of "undesigned coincidences" which to most minds carries with it complete conviction.

But to return to Abraham. In Genesis xiv. there is a well-known narrative which may be thus summarised. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, with three allies invaded Canaan to quell an insurrection of five vassal kings. The names of Chedorlaomer's three allies were Amraphel, king of Shinar; Arioch, king of Ellaser; and Tidal, king of Goyyim (A.V. "king of nations"). The rebellious kings were defeated, and two of them slain, and among the captured carried off by the victors was Lot, Abram's nephew. Abram, when he heard this, set off with three confederate chiefs, and, making a night attack, surprised the four kings and rescued the spoil of the captives, including, of course, Lot. On his return, Melchizedek, king of Salem, came out to meet him, and blessed him, and received from him tithes of the spoil. This is the story—or such part of it as concerns our present purpose—and even the most moderate of the Higher Critics assumed that it was a tradition which was not put into writing before the year 900 B.C. Popular opinion is disposed to attach considerable value to tradition, but anyone who has given special attention to the subject must know how liable tradition is to distort a truth out of all recognition, and that, too, in the course of a few years. To say that a story has been orally transmitted for over a thousand years is practically equivalent to saying it is a myth. This would probably in time have been the prevailing opinion concerning Abram's rescue of Lot but for the discoveries of archæologists. First it was pointed out that Kudur was an Elamitic term for servant, occurring in several Babylonian proper names, and that Lagamar (laomer) was the name of an Elamite goddess. There seemed therefore a certain verisimilitude in giving to the king of Elam the name Chedorlaomer. This afforded a presumption, at least,

that one of the four kings was a real person living at the time of which this chapter in Genesis treats. A second name, Amraphel, is by nearly all Assyrian scholars identified with the great king Khammu-rabi or Ammu-rabi already alluded to. A third name is also met with in the inscriptions. G. Smith pointed out that King Arioch was none other than King Eri-Aker, a monarch well known from inscriptions and tablets, and the son of Kudur-Mabug; and next Rawlinson showed that Ellasa was Larson (al Larsa = city of Larsa). King Arioch of Ellasa also was thus promoted from myth to history. Further, an inscription by Kudur-Mabug shows that Elamites actually were supreme in Canaan at this time just as this part of Genesis declares, so that the narrative receives support at almost all points. One further objection which was brought against this chapter has also been cleared away in a remarkable manner. The king of Salem is described as blessing Abram and receiving tithes from him. To this it was objected that Jerusalem, or Salem, was not so called before the time of David, but that previous to that time the stronghold of the Jebusites was known as the City of Zion. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets, however, have put an end to that objection. We know now that Uru-Salim (City of Salem) was in existence centuries before the time of David; we have, in fact, numerous letters written by its king; we know that it was even then famous for its temple; what more natural than that Abram, returning victorious from his expedition, should pay tithes to the priest-king of the God of Peace? Doubtless the matters touched upon here will long continue to afford material for discussion for critics and Assyriologists; but whatever the issue of such discussions, this much at least would seem to be unalterably established; that in this fourteenth chapter of Genesis we have to do with historical events in the life of the real Abraham, and not with myths created or manipulated by fanciful scribes living thirteen centuries later.

The Romance of Tel-el-Amarna.—Somewhere about fourteen centuries before Christ a king of the eighteenth dynasty

ruled over Egypt, whose name was Amenophis IV. His mother, Queen Teie, an Asiatic princess, was a sun worshipper, and influenced probably by her opinions, the king changed his name to Khu-n-Aten, "the splendour of the solar disc," and boldly declared that there was only one deity—Ra, the ancient sun god of Hierapolis. His attempt to abolish the other gods of Egypt and to force monotheism upon his people was, however, fiercely opposed by the powerful hierarchy at Thebes, and in consequence he removed thence with his Court and his archives, and built himself a new and splendid city farther south on the Nile, which he called Khut-Aten. He here showed himself an enlightened patron of art, which under his fostering influence shook off for a time the conventional ideal and became fresh and natural. In his new capital he erected a magnificent temple to the sun, resplendent with gold, precious stones, and marbles; and he adorned it with all the artistic treasures that the genius of that age was capable of producing. After about thirty years, however, the enemies of the reformed religion finally triumphed; and the king's beautiful city was levelled to the ground, and remained for thousands of years buried beneath the dust heaps of Tel-el-Amarna. A few years ago this interesting city was disinterred. The records of Khu-n-Aten's foreign office—the reports of his viceroys and political agents, his correspondence with the kings of Assyria, Babylon, and other empires—were recovered, and the result of their decipherment has been such as to revolutionise, in some respects, all previous conceptions of Israel's early history. Two facts revealed by these archives filled all students of biblical history with lively astonishment. One was that Canaan proved to be at this time—centuries before the Exodus—a highly civilised dependency of Egypt; the other was that the despatches from the governors of political officers of Canaan were written not in Phœnician, but in cuneiform letters and in Babylonish language. It will be convenient to explain these facts before proceeding further.

It was as early as 3500 B.C., at a time when Babylonia was divided into more than one kingdom, that Sargon, king of

Akkad, made the first expedition against Canaan of which any notice survives. The cuneiform inscriptions tell us that four times he made excursions into the land of the Amorites, on the fourth occasion completely subduing it; and these conquests were continued by Naram-Sin, his son. Half a century or more later (as we learn from the inscriptions of a city of Southern Babylonia ruled over by a high priest named Gudea) there was close commercial connection with Canaan, such as presupposes either its subjection to or its close alliance with Gudea's suzerain. The king of the Ammi-Satana again, some centuries later, calls himself "king of the land of the Amorites." He was the grandson of the great Khammu-rabi, and himself belonged, as we have already seen, to the Hebrew race of South Arabia. Further evidence of an indirect kind brings the date of this Babylonian occupation much later. In the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence the Babylonians are spoken of as "Kassites," and as the Kassite Dynasty of Babylonian kings was not founded till 1786 B.C., we must look for some later date than that for the supersession of Babylonian by Egyptian authority in Canaan. The cuneiform inscriptions thus make it clear that for many centuries—perhaps even for a thousand years—Babylonish influences were paramount in Canaan. It does not follow that during all this time Canaan had no independent existence; there may have been many political vicissitudes from time to time; but it seems certain that during this period the civilisation of Babylon spread over the whole district; its language was adopted by the educated classes, and its mark was so deeply impressed upon the country that it even survived all through the successive occupations by the Egyptian and the Israelite.

After the Babylonian came the Egyptian conquest. This seems to have been the work mainly of Thothmes II. and Thothmes III. in the eighteenth dynasty (*circa* 1500 B.C. to 1450 B.C.). The Tel-el-Amarna letters (*circa* 1400 B.C.) depict what was then the condition of the country. It is paralleled very closely, as has been frequently pointed out, by our own position in India at this day. In some cases native princes were allowed

to retain their hereditary dominions subject to the payment of tribute and the provision of troops for the Egyptian service. In some places there was an Egyptian resident to watch the conduct of the native king, or a detachment of Egyptian troops to guard against revolt. There were certain towns, again, which were entirely incorporated in the Egyptian Empire. In the time of Khu-n-Aten, however, when most of the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence was written, Egypt was no longer able to hold its own with a firm hand in Canaan. Its officers were constantly pleading in their letters for the immediate despatch of troops, if all was not to be lost; and these troops apparently were never sent, so that Canaan became the theatre of innumerable intrigues and dissensions. But the decline of a mighty empire is like the decay of some great oak—even its limbs, which are first affected, die slowly; and accordingly we find Egypt winning victories in Canaan so late as the time of Rameses II. and Rameses III. in the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties. With the withdrawal of the last-mentioned monarch, however, the Egyptian connection came to an end, and Canaan was left, as Professor Sayce has said, "the prey of the first resolute invader who had strength and courage at his back."

The letters from Canaan to King Khu-n-Aten are not all from kings and diplomatists; some of them are from ladies, and give interesting particulars on sumptuary and other matters. Altogether the correspondence throws a vivid light on the geographical, political, and social condition of Canaan at the time preceding the Exodus. The popular conception—which, however, is certainly not founded on the testimony of Scripture—is that at the time of Joshua's invasion Canaan was a land inhabited by rude tribes of semi-barbarians. We must now dismiss that conception utterly. It was the meeting-place of the two great civilisations of the ancient world, Babylon and Egypt, and it became accordingly, as we might have expected, a focus of trade, a hive of industry, a workshop which supplied the world with many artistic treasures. In its cities were to be found learned scribes, wily diplomatists,

highly trained military officers, delicately nurtured ladies, and all the other ingredients of an artificial and highly polished society. From the inscriptions of Thothmes III. we learn that among other things brought from Canaan were chariots plated with gold, suits of armour, vases and bowls of gold, silver, and bronze, elaborately wrought, and costly woods inlaid with ivory or gems; and all this is confirmed by passages in the Tel-el-Amarna letters, and by a picture on a tomb in Thebes representing the princes of Canaan bringing their tribute. It is clear that Professor Sayce does not speak without warrant when he says of the time of Joshua's invasion: "At that period Canaan already had behind it a long civilised past. The country was filled with schools and libraries, with richly furnished palaces, and the workshops of the artisans. The cities on the coast had their fleets partly of merchantmen, partly of warships, and an active trade was carried on with all parts of the known world." If this background be kept in view as we read the books of Joshua and Judges, it is surprising how much more life-like the figures in it forthwith become.

The Tel-el-Amarna letters are helpful to the biblical student in several ways. Formerly, when the critics met with anything in the Old Testament that could be traced to Babylonish influence, whether in language, religion, or topography, it was at once assumed that its origin must be traced to some date *after the Babylonish Captivity*. This assumption can no longer be made. It is clear that Joshua's conquest did not sweep away the original inhabitants.* It is now held to be certain that the Israelites adopted the language of the people among whom they settled; and since the Canaanites were numerous enough to change the language of their conquerors, we may be sure that they must also have impressed upon them the Babylonish civilisation which had prevailed among themselves for so many centuries. In point of fact, we know from the Tel-el-Amarna letters that many of the names and places

* Judges ii. 3, 21; Joshua xv. 63; 1 Kings ix. 20, 21.

which figure prominently throughout Israel's history—Jerusalem, Bethel, Lachish, Megiddo, Askelon, Azalon, Gath, Carmel, Sidon, etc.—bore the same names before the invasion of the twelve tribes as after; and this tends to show that there was no absolute dislocation in the history of the land.

The Tel-el-Amarna letters, again, help us to understand the comparative ease with which the Israelites took possession of the country God had promised them. The condition of Canaan at that time must have been not unlike that of Britain when the Roman armies were finally withdrawn; weakness and dissensions rendered them an easy prey to the twelve tribes, who had been hardened and disciplined by the forty years' wandering in the wilderness.

What lends, however, to these letters their chief value is the fact that they show what degree of literary culture must have prevailed among the Israelites from the time of their settlement in Canaan onwards. They enable us to answer with confidence and certainty the question which is, perhaps, the most important in the whole range of biblical criticism, viz. *Were the Israelites, when they left Egypt, likely to be in possession of any written documents concerning their past; and, if so, were they able to hand these on with additions to the generations that succeeded?* This all-important question needs to be considered in some detail, and it will be well, therefore, to bring all the evidence bearing upon it carefully together.

The Antiquity of Writing among the Hebrew Race.—Of the results which the more moderate of the Higher Critics claim to have established only one is really dangerous to faith. They assert that the Hexateuch is made up of four or five separate documents which have been pieced together, and which may easily be distinguished, and the assertion is not disputed by the ablest of their adversaries. They further fix the dates at which these various documents were written as, roughly speaking, from the ninth to the sixth century B.C. (*circa* 850 to 550 B.C.), which is over a thousand years later than some of the historical events recorded in them. There

is nothing disquieting in this, *provided the original documents are themselves based upon written records.* Suppose that a thousand years hence the earliest records of the Saxon Period of English history which survive are those contained in the historical writings of Freeman. That will not occasion any mistrust to our descendants, provided it is known that the many centuries which separate Freeman from the Saxons were centuries of literary activity during which historical records were likely to survive. In point of fact, we know that the records of the Saxons written during our time are much more reliable than those of chroniclers who lived, say, in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. There is nothing, then, either surprising or disquieting in the mere fact, if it be a fact, that the documents incorporated in the Hexateuch are of comparatively late date. But the Higher Critics, even the more moderate of them, have been inclined to go much further than this. They have hinted plainly that the documents comprised in the Hexateuch were *not founded upon older written material,* but were the first literary embodiment of oral tradition which had been handed down for thirteen or fourteen centuries. If this assertion could be proved it would dissipate all the earlier history of Israel into myth; but having regard to the recent results of archæology it is not too much to say that this theory has not an atom of evidence to sustain it, and is absolutely untenable.

It was held by Robertson Smith and others as a sort of axiom, that when the Semitic historian had several documents before him, he would not assimilate them and then reproduce them in his own words as would a modern, but would simply dovetail them together. Accordingly, whenever a homogeneous document is discovered as forming part of any book of the Old Testament, it is at once assumed that this cannot be founded upon older literary material; if it were so, the critic would be able to detect it, just as he has detected the parts of which the Hexateuch is composed! But surely this axiom is a most extraordinary one. To assimilate written material, and reproduce it in one's own words, is not a process which it

required great genius to invent; it is done by every little child as soon as he can read or write. If a great race like the Semites, comprising nations of marvellous literary ability, never hit upon this obvious device, that is one of the most remarkable facts in the whole range of human history. And, on the other hand, if they did hit upon it, the critics' inability further to dissect the component documents of Genesis no more proves that they were not founded upon older material than Freeman's history is proved to be untrustworthy in its allusions to the Saxons because we do not discern in it undigested bits of the ancient "Saxon Chronicle." It is quite true that in the earliest books of the Old Testament literary material is so pieced together that the seams can easily be seen; and that elsewhere we sometimes find foreign passages embedded in an otherwise homogeneous work, like pebbles in a bed of clay. But a very simple explanation of such phenomena has long presented itself to the present writer. It would seem that at the time when the books of the Hexateuch were finally put together, the documents comprised in them *had already a sacred character in the compiler's eyes*. It was not that the obvious method of assimilation and reproduction had not occurred to him, but that the materials were too sacred to be thus treated; he dare not tamper with what had been once written, beyond incorporating it with a parallel narrative which was as much venerated as itself. It seems impossible to account in any other way for the phenomena presented, *e.g.* by Genesis xxxvii., where two parallel narratives, only slightly different in their colouring, are so dovetailed together that the repetitions are obvious. Clearly, then, we are not driven to believe that the Semites were unable to deal with literary matter as freely as other peoples. If, indeed, it could be shown that the Hebrew race were unable either to read or write until *circa* 850 to 550 B.C., that might lend colour to Robertson Smith's contention. But it now can be shown, on the contrary, that the chosen race were brought up in a literary environment from the days of Abraham downward without a break.

Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees about 2000 B.C.

Babylonia possessed at that time a high degree of civilisation, and specimens of its history and literature engraved on tablets of clay or cylinders of stone are now to be found by the thousand in the museums of Europe. The expedition sent out under Dr. Peters by the University of Pennsylvania has recently discovered at Nippur* clay tablets dating back at least as far as 5000 B.C.; so that writing had been practised in Babylonia fully three thousand years before Abraham was born. And when he and his immediate descendants wandered to Haran or to Canaan, they would find, as we now know, at least among the learned class, the same language spoken and the same literature extant as in Ur of the Chaldees.

And when the descendants of Jacob settled in Egypt they were brought into contact with new elements of civilisation, a new religion, and a new literature. This would probably give a still wider range to the culture they already possessed. In the land of Goschen they lived in happiness and prosperity probably for some centuries, and we cannot doubt that many of them rose to positions of dignity there, just as they did in every other land in which their lot was cast in subsequent ages. It is true that for some decades before the Exodus they had been subject to cruel persecutions which must have reduced the rank and file to a somewhat degraded position, both intellectually and morally. But we must not assume that none escaped this degradation. Just as a recent Russian persecution of the Jews left the rich, the learned, and the cultured practically untouched, so must it have been in the days of the persecuting Pharaohs; and no doubt many of these more fortunate members of the race would cast in their lot with their persecuted brethren, as Moses did. When that great migration took place, of which a very concise account is given in Exodus, we are not to picture to ourselves a rabble of slaves with scarce any possessions but their loin-cloths. It was the migration of a nation including representatives of every class, and if the accounts of the wanderings be read

* See *Nippur, or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates*, by J. P. PETERS, D.D. (Putnam.)

carefully, it will become clear that the Hebrews carried with them into the wilderness those arts and crafts and elements of civilisation which had prevailed among them in happier days, and which their persecutors had certainly not been able to stamp out. That there were those among them who could read and write may now be accepted as certain.* We may feel quite sure that neither the Oppression nor the Exodus caused any irreparable dislocation of the Israelites' history, nor cut them off from the inheritance of their past traditions.

When the twelve tribes settled in Canaan we know, thanks to the Tel-el-Amarna letters, that they were still surrounded by a literary environment. We learn that one town in Judah, Debir, was known as Kirjath-Sannah, "the City of Instruction," and Kirjath-Sepher, "the City of the Scribes"; and doubtless libraries and seats of learning were to be found in other parts of Canaan also. The language which Israel spoke was nearly allied to the Phœnician of the Canaanites, and later became practically identical with it; and that in its original form it was a written language from very early times is indisputable. The famous Moabite stone, which is inscribed in a language practically identical with Hebrew, dates from *circa* 900 B.C.; and Sayce says that an examination of the letters "makes it clear that the Phœnician alphabet had long been in use in the kingdoms of Mesha."† The inscription in the conduit of the Pool of Siloam belongs to the reign of Ahaz or Hezekiah (*circa* 740 or 720 B.C.), and its letters show clearly that the scribes of Judah had long been accustomed to write upon papyrus or parchment.‡ Considering how very slowly changes in writing take place, it is absurd to suppose that the "pen of the ready writer" was unknown at the time

* Recent investigations tend to support the suggestions made long ago by MICHÆLIS (*Commentary on Laws of Moses*, vol. i. art. 51), that the "officers" whom the Pharaoh of the Oppression set over the Israelites (Exod. v. 6), and whom Moses couples always with the Judges (Deut. i. 16, 17; xvi. 18, etc.) were the scribes or literary class.

† *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 251.

‡ *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 387.

of the Exodus (*circa* 1250 B.C.), especially when we remember that it had been in use among the Egyptians at that period for many centuries. It seems probable, indeed, that the Phœnician alphabet was introduced into Canaan by the Israelites. The records of Canaan have not been unearthed as those of Babylonia and Egypt have, and so it is impossible to speak with certainty; but hitherto the only inscriptions found in Canaan of a date anterior to 1250 B.C. in the *native language* have been two seal-cylinders (*circa* 1400 B.C.) in cuneiform characters, and an inscription to a Canaanitish god put up in the reign of Rameses II. (*circa* 1300) in Egyptian hieroglyphics. This affords a slight presumption that the original inhabitants of Canaan had no alphabet of their own, and had to borrow that of their conquerors. Even if this be so, however, it does not affect adversely the facts that have been detailed above. In any case the Hebrew people lived surrounded by a literary environment from the days of their ancestor Abraham onward. All that remains to be assumed is that later the learned men of Israel and Judah gradually transcribed their religious records into the language now known as "Hebrew," partly from their own Semitic dialect, partly perhaps from Babylonish and Egyptian documents. This may account for the composite character of their earliest narratives.*

On the whole, then, an examination of the results of archæology has a reassuring effect for the Biblical student.

* It would seem that, as regards Palestine, there was a close parallel linguistically between the time of the Judges and the time of our Lord. The Babylonish tongue, like Greek in the later period, must have been familiar to the educated as the language of commerce and literature. Egyptian was known to many, because it was the language of the then dominant power, just as was Latin in the first century; Hebrew was a vernacular corruption of the more "classical" language spoken by Abraham and his descendants, just as the Aramaic of Palestine at the opening of the Christian era was a vernacular corruption of Hebrew. St. Paul spoke in Aramaic when in Palestine, read Hebrew as a "dead language," and wrote in Greek; and doubtless there were scribes in the time of the Judges who similarly were acquainted with several of the languages which met and mingled in Canaan.

It shows that the historians of Israel, at all events up to the time of the Babylonian and Persian captivities, were in close contact with the national records, and that they used their material honestly. It does not, indeed, prove that their histories were verbally inspired, still less that no errors afterwards crept into their text. It is clear that mistakes in numbers and dates are numerous, but we may henceforth have at least the same sense of security in reading the ancient records of the Chosen People as in reading the history of Greece or Rome. Having arrived at this conclusion, we shall be wise to exchange the critical for the devotional temper in studying the Old Testament, assured that if there are mistakes in the text they will not seriously impair the value of the religious lessons which the historical books impart to all who approach them with an earnest spirit.

THE SOURCES OF THE HEXATEUCH*

THE two questions of the Mosaic *origin* and the Mosaic *authorship* of the Pentateuch must be carefully distinguished. That Moses was the originator of the religious institutions of Israel is not seriously questioned by any sober critic, but how far the books which have come down to us bearing his name were actually written by him is a matter much disputed.

(1) That he wrote the whole of the books just as we have them no critic would now contend. Indeed, such a theory is so entirely refuted by the testimony of the writings themselves that it is difficult to conceive how it could have originated. We can scarce imagine the great lawgiver writing: "The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people" (Exod. xi. 3), or boasting, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3). When we find that the Book of Deuteronomy begins thus: "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond Jordan in the wilderness," it becomes clear that the writer was a resident in Western Palestine, and wrote after Israel had ceased to be nomadic. Further, when we read in Genesis concerning a list of names: "These are the kings that reigned in Edom before there reigned any king over the land of Israel" (Gen. xxxvi. 31), we know that the writer—whether an editor, a reviser, or the author of a new history based on ancient records—must have lived subsequent to the establishment of the Israelitish monarchy, and at the very least some four or five centuries later than Moses. Facts such as these—and they might be multiplied indefinitely—do not necessarily

* Hexateuch = Pentateuch + Joshua.

prove the Pentateuch in any degree untrustworthy; but they make it impossible to believe that the history *as we have it* was the work of Moses himself.

(2) Closer investigation carries us a step further. The careful reader will discover over and over again in the Hexateuch two or more parallel, but not identical narratives, woven into one in a manner somewhat confusing. An instance of this is to be found in Genesis xxxvii., where the treachery of Joseph's brethren is narrated in twofold form. According to one account *Reuben* is the good brother who wishes to save Joseph's life, and he persuaded his brethren not to slay him but to put him into a pit. Then Joseph is sold to some Midianites who passed by, and Reuben, on finding that he has disappeared, makes great lamentations. In this version of the story the episode ends thus, "And the *Midianites* sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard" (Gen. xxxvii. *vv.* 22, 23, 24, part 28, 29, and 36). According to the other account *Judah* is the good brother who seeks to deliver Joseph, it is the *Ishmaelites* who pass by, and to them he is sold for twenty pieces of silver, and the narrative ends: "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the *Ishmaelites* who had brought him down thither" (Gen. xxxvii. *vv.* 25, 26, 27; xxxix. 1). As thus disentangled, the two slightly different accounts are clear enough; but as they appear in Genesis xxxvii. they compose a curiously confused narrative. (Contrast also Gen. xlii. 37 and xliii. 8.)

A second example may be found in Numbers xvi., where similarly two narratives have been imperfectly fused into one. One of these narratives is the account of the rebellion of Korah and two hundred and fifty others, *Levites*. The cause of discontent was *jealousy of the priests*. The place where the final encounter with Moses took place was "*the door of the tent of meeting*," and the punishment of Korah and those who with him offered incense was that *fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them* (Num. xvi. 1 (part), 2 to end of 11, 16 to 23, part

24, 35). The narrative which is mixed up with this is that of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were *Reubenites.* Their complaint was of the *weariness of the way and of Moses making himself a prince over them.* The last encounter with Moses took place *at the door of their own tents* and not at the tent of meeting, and their punishment was that "the Lord made a new thing" *and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up* (Num. xvi. *vv.* 1 (part), 12 to end of 15, 25, 26, middle of 27 to end of 34). That this incident is really quite independent of the story of Korah is absolutely proved by Deuteronomy xi. 6, where it is narrated without any reference to the rebellion of the Levites. The attempt to combine the two in Numbers xvi. leads to strange confusions, the story applying sometimes to Korah alone (*vv.* 8, 16, 19, 32), sometimes to Dathan and Abiram (*v.* 27), and sometimes to all three (*vv.* 1, 24, 27).

Of course, if these two instances stood alone it would not be beyond the ingenuity of commentators to explain away their peculiarities. But they are given here merely as specimens of phenomena of frequent occurrence in the Hexateuch. The reader may examine for himself the two accounts of Creation (Gen. i. to ii. 4, and Gen. ii. 4 to 25), which differ in the order of the creative acts, and also the narrative of the Flood (Gen. vi., vii., viii.), which has several of its parts duplicated, so that, for instance, while in vii. 2 Noah was commanded to take seven pairs of every clean beast into the ark, according to vi. 19 and vii. 16 he was to take two of every sort without distinction.

Besides these instances of imperfect amalgamation there are numerous examples in the Hexateuch of stories narrated in two forms, without any attempt at reconciliation. Thus the name Isaac is explained by the laughter of Abraham in Genesis xvii. 17, and by the laughter of Sarah in xviii. 12 and xxi. 6. Similarly, according to Genesis xxxii. 28 Jacob's name was changed to Israel on the occasion of his wrestling with the angel at Peniel; but according to Genesis xxxv. 10 it was at a later period, "when he came from Padan-Aram," that God

decreed the change of name. So, too, in the account of the meeting of Jacob and Esau, narrated in Genesis xxxii. 3 to xxxiii. 18, Esau is already settled in Edom, yet according to Genesis xxxvi. Esau set out for Edom at a much later period. Such discrepancies, it is true, show that we are dealing with genuine history and not with the product of a forger. The compiler, it would seem, was from a literary point of view almost too careful not to tamper with his material. But such facts make it quite plain that in the books of the Pentateuch we have not the *ipsissima verba* of Moses, but the work of an editor, or editors, who compiled from several parallel accounts. These accounts are pieced together much as a Christian might unify the four Gospels into one narrative, holding the original documents too sacred to be modified even in the interests of consistency.

(3) Not merely, however, has the presence of different documents been detected in the Hexateuch, but these documents have been to a great extent disentangled from the books which contain them, and assigned to their various anonymous authors. Without going into the minutiæ of critical methods, some indication may be given of the kind of evidence upon which the conclusions of the critics are based. (*a*) It has been already remarked that there are long passages in the Hexateuch in which the Divine name used is almost exclusively Jehovah (Lord), and others in which the name appears almost always as Elohim (God). There is thus afforded a presumption that the books are of a composite character, and no other satisfactory explanation of the peculiarity has been discovered. Now suppose this test to be applied to the first nineteen chapters of *Genesis*, where its application is comparatively easy. When this is done it is at once seen (*b*) that the Jehovistic sections are written in a literary style which contrasts strongly with the Elohistic sections, and that each use of the name as it recurs is accompanied by its own peculiar characteristics. The presumption that these chapters are of a composite character now becomes almost a certainty. It is difficult to imagine an author using one name for God in some chapters

of his book and another name in others, and it altogether surpasses belief that in addition his style should change as often as the name changed. (*c*) The application of a third criterion makes the proof stronger still. It has been already pointed out that there are numerous instances in the Hexateuch of slightly different accounts of the same incident. Now if the Hexateuch be divided into sections, basing the division solely on the grounds already given, it will be found on examination that the alternative accounts are distributed between the sections in such a way as at once to account for their differences. Thus in the first nineteen chapters of Genesis we find in the Jehovistic sections—

(1) Order of creation: man, vegetation, animals, woman (Gen. ii. 4–25).
(2) The clean beasts to be taken into the ark by sevens (Gen. vii. 2).
(3) The name Isaac attributed to the laughter of Sarah (Gen. xviii. 10–14).

While in the Elohistic sections occur the contradictory statements:

(1) Order of creation: vegetation, animals, man (Gen. i).
(2) All beasts to be taken into the ark by twos (Gen. vi. 19).
(3) The name Isaac attributed to the laughter of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 16–19).

It will now be seen that the cumulative evidence is very strong. Each set of sections is not only distinguished by a different name for the Divine Being, but also by a different literary style and a different account of the various incidents in the subject-matter common to them; and the various writers can thus be clearly recognised as they recur. These methods of analysis do not exhaust, of course, all the critical apparatus which is brought to bear upon the complicated phenomena of the Hexateuch, for from Genesis xx. onward other elements appear and the problem is less simple, but these may serve as specimens of the kind of investigation by which assured results have been attained.

It now only remains to give some account of the various detached documents so far as their existence has been clearly demonstrated. Some critics have attempted to carry out the analysis into far greater detail than the evidence warrants, but we may feel justified in accepting results which have been concurred in even by those who count themselves opponents of the Higher Critics. As to the date at which the various documents were written there is far less agreement; but this is not of great importance, for even if we leave inspiration out of account altogether, it by no means follows that a later historian is less trustworthy than an earlier.

"J." One of the authors is usually denoted by this letter. He is the writer who uses Jehovah (more strictly Yahveh)—the word rendered LORD in our English translation—as the Divine Name. It is probable that he belonged to the Southern Kingdom, and represented the historical tradition as current there. It will be remembered that in the story of the betrayal of Joseph he represented Judah as the brother who wished to save Joseph's life (compare Gen. xliii. 8); and there are other indications (see *e.g.* the Judaic traditions preserved in Genesis xxxviii.) that he was specially interested in the great southern tribe. There is diversity of opinion among the critics as to his exact date, but there seems to be agreement that he wrote between the limits of 900 B.C. and 750 B.C.

"E" is the letter used to denote a writer whose work is intimately connected with that of "J," but who prefers Elohim (God) as the Divine Name. He probably represents the historical tradition as current in the Northern Kingdom, for in his story of Joseph, Reuben (not Judah) is the hero (Gen xxxvii. 22 and xlii. 37), and the places that are made prominent in his narrative are places in the north, such as Shechem, Bethel, etc. This writer does not appear in *Genesis* till the twentieth chapter is reached, and then he frequently recurs in intimate association with J. There is conflict of opinion as to which was the earlier writer, but approximately

the dates assigned by the various critics to E cover much the same period as those assigned to J, viz. 900 B.C. to 750 B.C.

"JE." The distinction between J and E is, from a *literary* point of view, not of much importance. They lived about the same period; they dealt approximately with the same materials; the style of the one so closely resembles that of the other that by style alone they could not be distinguished, though when separated on other data minute differences appear. For literary purposes their writings may be treated as one, and spoken of as "JE"; and it is thus that they will be designated in the following chapters, the two letters serving as a convenient reminder of the composite character of the document. It has been truly said of JE that "it belongs to the golden age of Hebrew literature," which is equivalent to saying that it is to be reckoned as among the literary masterpieces of the world. Its authors are surpassed by none in the power of graphic and picturesque description, and by few in the mastery of the pathetic and sublime. In literary power they contrast most favourably with the author next to be described (P), whose pen is dull indeed compared with theirs. When the reader comes across masterpieces like the story of Joseph in Genesis or of Balak and Balaam in Numbers, he may be quite sure that he is reading the work of J and E and not of P. In beauty of moral teaching their supremacy is equally unchallenged, J and E belonging to the class of inspired or *prophetic* writers, and P to that of the formal or *priestly*.

"P." This letter is used to denote an author* who was probably a priest, who certainly viewed the religious history of Israel from a priestly standpoint, and whose work embodies most of the priestly and ceremonial law contained in the Hexateuch. Like E, he uses the Divine Name Elohim (God),

* It is used also sometimes to denote what he *wrote*, viz. "the Priest's Code."

and therefore his work is sometimes styled the *Elohistic narrative;* but more frequently it is termed the *Priest's Code.* The larger part of the Hexateuch is assigned to him. It was his hand that drew up the framework of Genesis, though the bulk of the material contained in this framework is the work of J and E. He is responsible for about the half of *Exodus*, almost the whole of the first seventeen chapters of *Leviticus*, about three-fourths of *Numbers*, and a fourth of *Joshua.* In the beautiful book *Deuteronomy* no traces of his influence are found, and certainly nothing of his handiwork. As has been already said, his writing is in strong contrast to JE. "Its language is that of a jurist rather than that of an historian." The style is formal and stereotyped, making little use of simile, metaphor, or other dramatic or poetic elements. The author aims rather at precision and accuracy of statement than at picturesque description. His history abounds in genealogical lists, inventories, and measurements, and in topographical and chronological details. We may illustrate these characteristics by comparing his account of the Flood with that of J. The former states the wood of which the ark was made, its exact length, breadth, and height, the elevation of the roof, viz. one cubit (Gen. vi. 16), the number of stories, the position of the door, etc. It gives also the exact distance between the surface of the Flood at its highest and the top of the highest mountains (Gen. vii. 20), and it fixes to a day the date at which each of the following events took place, viz. the commencement of the Flood (Gen. vii. 11), its decrease (vii. 24; viii. 3), the resting of the ark on Ararat (viii. 4), the uncovering of the tops of the mountains (viii. 5), the reappearance of the surface of the ground (viii. 13), and the restoration of the earth to its normal condition (viii. 14). These characteristics are not found in J, but are apt to manifest themselves wherever the work of P recurs. P, again, makes constant use of refrains or catchwords to mark stages in his narratives. Thus in his account of the Creation (Gen. i. to ii. 4) we have the three refrains, "The evening and the morning were the —— day," "And it was so," "And

God saw that it was good," occurring again and again in the course of thirty-four verses. He is fond also of using formulæ, sometimes repeating them with wearisome frequency. A striking example may be found in Numbers i. where the formula runs, "Of the children of ——, their generations by their families, by their fathers' houses, those that were numbered from twenty years old and upwards, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them of the tribe of —— were ——." This formula is actually repeated twelve times in the chapter without any variation except the insertion of the names of each of the twelve tribes in turn. These and other characteristics of P are so marked, and of such frequent recurrence, that it is comparatively easy to identify his writing.

As to the date of P there has been considerable divergence of opinion, but of late the critics have been inclined to fix a date more recent than Ezekiel, that is to say, later than 590 B.C. Provided P was an honest writer, and had adequate material for his work, the date is of no great importance. That he was honest may be deduced from the fact that he makes no attempt to disguise the frailties of his ancestors (see, *e.g.*, Exod. xvi. 2), nor even of the national heroes, Moses and Aaron (Num. xx. 12, 24; xxvii. 14, etc.). That he had genuine material at his disposal is admitted by the Higher Critics themselves, for those documents which they recognise as long anterior to P speak of the institutions to which he alludes, *e.g.* burnt offerings (Gen. viii. 20, 21; 1 Sam. ii. 28), incense (1 Sam. ii. 28), distinction between clean and unclean (Judges xiii. 5, 7), Nazirites (Amos ii. 11), guilt offerings (1 Sam. vi. 3), shewbread (1 Sam. xxi. 6), etc.; and thus undoubtedly the bulk of the institutions with which he deals had anciently existed in Israel.

It has, however, been contended that in much that relates to the Temple and the Priesthood P was not really dealing with Mosaic institutions, but with an order of things which had grown up many centuries later, and that even if he honestly believed Moses to be the author of these institutions

he was in error. The grounds upon which this charge is made must be briefly summarised. In the writings of P, as indeed also in Deuteronomy, which is an earlier work, the Israelites are most strictly forbidden to offer up sacrifices to God anywhere except in the one central sanctuary. Before the reign of Solomon this would be wherever the ark was located, and later the Temple. It was also enacted that none but priests should sacrifice at the altar. Yet in documents which were written before P, and long after the time of Moses, it would seem that laymen sometimes offered up sacrifices, and certainly altars were erected in many parts of the land without the slightest indication being given that there was anything sinful or displeasing to God in the custom. Such altars were erected—to give only a few instances out of many—at Bochim (Judges ii. 5), Mizpah (1 Sam. vii. 9), Zuph (1 Sam. ix. 11–14), and Giloh (2 Sam. xv. 12). Similarly the elaborate rules laid down by P for the care of the ark by Levites (Num. iii. 31 ; iv. 1–15) accord ill with what we read of its treatment in the time of Samuel, when, after its return from the Philistines, it was placed in the care of a man of Kirjath-jearim, whose son was consecrated to take care of it (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2). Up to the time of Solomon, therefore, it is argued, nothing was known of the elaborate ecclesiastical code of P or the centralisation of worship which he insists upon. To this it has been replied that in a transitional period like that of the Judges—a period, too, of national dissensions and divisions—it would have been quite impossible to carry out the injunctions of Moses on this particular subject ; such injunctions presuppose, in fact, a united nation and a completed religious organisation. It has been pointed out, also, that after the division of Israel into two kingdoms the scribes of the northern kingdom would find it to their interest to minimise those Mosaic commandments which pointed to Jerusalem as the only lawful place of sacrifice, and we do not know how far northern recensions may account for passages like Exodus xx. 24, which seem to show that God might be sacrificed to, not in one place only, but in

many. In any case, the facts are far from sufficient to establish firmly any such conclusion as the Higher Critics seek to deduce from them. It is quite conceivable, as the analogy of Christian history shows, that the true account may be as follows. Moses may have given the germ of all that is contained in the "Priest's Code." It may have been disregarded, set aside, or even honestly misunderstood for centuries; and a later age may have grasped alike its letter and its spirit, and may have taught and practised once more what had been so long obscured. The Roman Catholicism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was ostensibly based upon the New Testament, and the majority of its adherents honestly believed that all its rites and doctrines possessed the Divine authority. The Reformed Churches discovered that the Divine revelation had come to be largely misunderstood, and they reverted to the true sense of the Christian Scriptures. Now if it were allowable to imagine the Christian religion swept away, and some learned student criticising its history thousands of years hence, it is quite likely that in studying the practice and tenets of the Anglican Church he might suspect that the Reformers had forged much of the New Testament for their own purposes. "It could not have existed before," he would argue, "since for centuries the Church had ignored much that was in it and practised much that was not." Or we may take a nearer illustration. If we could look into the parish churches of a hundred and fifty years ago all would be unfamiliar to us—the internal structure, the ritual, the ornaments, the apparel of the minister would contrast most strongly and unfavourably with what is seen in our churches now. In fact, if we could utterly blot out all knowledge of the early history of the Prayer-book, it might most plausibly be contended that the famous "Ornaments Rubric" was forged by the leaders of the Oxford Movement! Certainly it was a dead letter sixty years ago, and for generations divines seemed unaware of its existence. Fortunately the history of the Prayer-book from the beginning is known, and we are aware that there has been no forgery, but only a reversion

to the law of an earlier and better time, and that the majority of our churches now present much such an appearance as, say, Queen Elizabeth intended from the first they should present. Now, as regards the Mosaic legislation, we have lost the earliest documents. What material P incorporated in his work we do not know, nor what changes and adaptations, if any, that material had undergone since the time of Moses. That P, if a priest, may have been unconsciously biassed in his interpretation of his authorities is likely enough, just as Dr. Pusey and Dr. Arnold were necessarily biassed each in his own direction in their interpretation of Scripture in our own times. If we compare the work of P with the earlier book *Deuteronomy* we find, undoubtedly, that it is more "advanced" in an ecclesiastical sense, that it is more "priestly" and less "prophetic." And honesty requires us to recognise this. But after making all such allowances it is clear that we are not driven to believe the writings of P have little or no connection with the teachings of Moses. Rather the evidence compels us to allow that his was a conscientious attempt to formulate the teachings of Moses as they were understood in his day, and the fact that his own nation undoubtedly accepted it as such must be allowed to outweigh many difficulties.

"H." At chapter xvii. of the Book of Leviticus a document makes its appearance which is not, like the rest of the book, the work of P, though fragments of P's work are incorporated in it. This has been called "the Law of Holiness," from the frequency with which moral and ceremonial holiness is enjoined, generally in conjunction with the expression "I am the Lord." This latter phrase is very characteristic of this document, and occurs in it with extreme frequency. For example, it is repeated fifteen times in chapter xix. and six times in the last seven verses. The Law of Holiness is generally supposed to be an expansion of some more ancient code which was incorporated with P by some redactor. That it was not P's handiwork is made clear by its different style, its marked peculiarities, and by the fact that it repeats laws

which P has already laid down in the earlier parts of *Leviticus*. Indeed, that it is an independent document is not seriously contested by any competent critic.

"D." The Book of Deuteronomy, one of the most beautiful books of the Bible, is apparently the work of a single author, who is generally denoted by "D." The work is an artistically constructed whole, recording the history of the last month of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. It is almost entirely homogeneous; for though the author appears to base his book upon a part of JE, viz. Exodus xx.–xxiii., he uses his materials in his own characteristic way, not simply piecing them together as was done by the final redactors of the other books, but first thoroughly assimilating them, and then re-issuing them, fused by his genius and stamped with his own individuality. It is clear that in a work of this kind it would be impossible to detect the originals upon which the author worked *unless we were already in possession of some of them.* By comparing *Deuteronomy* with Exodus xx.–xxiii., it becomes apparent that JE and D had material in common, or borrowed one from the other; but it is not to be supposed that where no connection with JE is to be traced the material is the invention of D; it is, of course, to be assumed that for this also he had adequate authorities, though we are no longer able to identify them. The theme of the book is love to God issuing in love for humanity, presented by means of the speeches and exhortations of Moses during the closing weeks of his life. The work glows with sanctified genius. "Nowhere else in the Old Testament do we breathe such an atmosphere of generous devotion to God, and of large-hearted benevolence towards men; and nowhere else is it shown with the same fulness of detail how these principles may be made to permeate the entire life of the community. . . . In his command of a chaste yet warm and persuasive eloquence he stands unique among writers of the Old Testament." *

As to the date of D there is much difference of opinion.

* DRIVER.

The book does not profess to be written by Moses, for it speaks always of him in the third person, and the author was evidently a resident in Western Palestine after the settlement of the twelve tribes (Deut. i. 5; iv. 41, etc.). On the other hand, the book must have been written prior to, and probably long prior to, the eighteenth year of King Josiah (B.C. 621), for admittedly the "book of the law," rediscovered in that year by Hilkiah the priest (2 Kings xxii. 8, etc.), included Deuteronomy. It is certain that D was unfamiliar with the work of P, and therefore lived earlier; but it is claimed that *Deuteronomy* was written considerably later than JE, and the date fixed by most modern critics is somewhere between the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. The priority of JE is asserted mainly because ecclesiastical institutions appear less developed in it than in Deuteronomy; but, as has already been pointed out, this argument cannot be accepted as entirely conclusive. If we are to assume that D lived at a comparatively late period, we must look upon his work as an authoritative restatement of certain aspects of the teaching of Moses adapted to the needs of his times. That he was in the fullest sense inspired to do this work we cannot doubt, for there is no book in the Old Testament which more manifestly breathes the power of the Holy Ghost.

To sum up, we can trace in the Hexateuch, besides the various redactors, at least five authors, J, E, P, H, and D. The existence of the five documents composed by them is indeed admitted by all competent students—it is granted, for example, by so redoubtable an opponent of the Higher Critics as Dr. Fritz Hommel.* As to the dates at which these various writers lived there is considerable divergence of opinion; but this, it must be insisted, is of little importance, provided we may assume that these were dealing with real historical matter. That they quoted from more ancient books is not disputed; in point of fact, the most ancient of them cites "the book of the wars of the Lord" (Num. xxi. 14) and "the book of Jashar"

* *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 9, 10.

(Joshua x. 13), and that even where they do not cite they are reproducing in their own words genuine historical records, just as a modern historian would do, we have every right to assume. When an editor pieces together several documents and makes one work of them, it is a comparatively easy matter to separate that work again into its several parts; but when an author reproduces in his own words the result of historical research, and the documents on which his studies were based are lost, it is as impossible to reproduce those documents from his writings as it would be to detect in a piece of paper or shoddy the rags which were used in its manufacture. It has already been shown that literary material was abundant in the East many centuries before the time of Abraham; and when we read in the writings of Hosea, whose date is *circa* 750 B.C., such words as these: "Though I write for him my law in ten thousand precepts, they are counted as a strange thing" (Hosea viii. 12), it is impossible to imagine that an author, who lived but a century earlier, had nothing but oral tradition to go upon. While we have thus ample warrant for believing that JE and the rest based their work on written historical material, there is adequate proof, also, that they used it honestly. Of their great national heroes Abraham is represented as marrying his father's daughter (Gen. xx. 12), and Jacob as marrying the second of two sisters in the lifetime of the first. In the days of those who gave to the Hexateuch its present form, these were accounted sins not only heinous, but truly hideous. And that edition after edition left the damning record untouched shows the absolute honesty with which the ancient historical records of Israel were handled. At the same time, we may be sure that records which spoke of such acts as if no blame attached to them must have belonged to a period centuries earlier than JE.

On the whole, then, criticism has done a good service in analysing the Hexateuch into its component parts. When we are aware how the work was formed, its repetitions, duplications, discrepancies cease to puzzle and distress us—rather they become witnesses to the substantial accuracy of the whole.

And the comparatively late date of the actual writers affords no proof whatever that their work is not genuine and reliable history. No one can fail to see that the atmosphere of the Hexateuch is entirely different from that of the Kings as depicted in the later historical books; and if written during the monarchy, its authors must have had at their command literary matter contemporary with the events which they describe.

THE LAWS OF THE HEXATEUCH.*

THE Laws of Moses are found scattered through the various books of the Hexateuch; no one book contains the whole of them, and some of them reappear again and again in slightly varied forms. It will much simplify matters, therefore, if these are brought together and classified in a single section, leaving only the historical and literary elements to be dealt with when the books are considered separately.

There are two ways of regarding the Mosaic Legislation. We may suppose that it is an absolutely perfect code, instituted by God Himself in every detail, and presenting a flawless ideal of national righteousness to the people upon whom it was imposed. Or we may think of it as a code representing the best that could be devised by a lawgiver whom God had filled with the wisdom of the Holy Ghost and endowed with plenary authority, but who used as his materials the least defective of existing customs and institutions, dealing with them as the early Christians dealt with heathen temples when they swept away the idolatrous symbols, held a service of purification, and then dedicated the building as a Christian church to the service of the true God. Under this view we shall expect to find in the Laws of Moses, not absolute perfection, but a distinct advance upon all that had preceded, and the germs which would develop later into an even loftier code, Now, if we adopt the first theory, we meet with insuperable

* In much that appears under this head I am indebted to Michaelis, to whom belongs the distinction of having written a work—*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*—which is more than a century old, and yet is quite modern in tone and still unsuperseded.

difficulties on every page, especially when such subjects are dealt with as polygamy, divorce, blood-feuds, and the like. But when we adopt the second every difficulty disappears. Moreover, no other theory is possible in view of the teaching of the New Testament. When our Lord said that easy divorce was permitted by Moses "because of the hardness of men's hearts," and when St. Paul spoke of certain enactments of the law as "weak and beggarly elements," they made it clear that we are not to look upon the Mosaic Polity as the absolute Divine ideal for nations, but as the legislation of a man of God who accommodates the ideal to what is practicable and possible. That Moses adapted existing institutions to the requirements of his people is beyond all doubt. We have already seen how deep and widespread was the influence of Babylonish culture all over the East from the time of Abraham to that of Moses; and to this may be traced many of the religious observances of Israel. The Assyrians and Babylonians "knew of 'peace-offerings' and of 'heave-offerings,' of the dedication of the first-born, and of sacrifices for sin. The gods were carried in procession in 'ships' which, we learn from the sculptures, resembled in form the Hebrew ark, and were borne on men's shoulders by means of staves. In front of the image of the god stood a table, on which shewbread was laid, and a distinction was drawn between the meat-offering and the animal sacrifice. Certain unclean kinds of food were forbidden, including the flesh of swine and 'creeping things'; and in the outer courts of the temples were large lavers called 'seas' like the 'sea' of Solomon's temple, in which the worshippers were required to cleanse themselves. Many of these regulations and rites came down from the Accadian period," *i.e.* from a period long anterior to Abraham.* To Egypt also Israel was indebted. "The whole description of the Tabernacle in Exodus is full of allusions to Egyptian customs: the strict rules for the purifying of the priests, the ephod of the high priest, the pomegranate decoration of the hem of his robe, his breastplate, and his mitre all had their

* Sayce's *Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments.*

counterpart among the Egyptians."* Circumcision, the offering of incense, the detestation of swine's flesh—these things, too, can be traced to ancient Egypt. As the seed which is sown in the earth has not the power of creating something out of nothing, but takes the elements by which it is surrounded—carbon, oxygen, and the rest—and changes them into lilies and roses, so was it as regards the Divine germs implanted in God's ancient people. It laid hold of the customs and institutions among which it had been placed, and transformed them into a beauty which was the antithesis of their former condition. The marvellous effects produced by this transforming power afford the best evidence of the Divine origin of the Mosaic Legislation. Rites and customs which formerly connoted sensuality, cruelty, and idolatry were made the symbols of purity, mercy, and a sublime spirituality. There are few miracles more marvellous than this, that a nation of newly emancipated slaves, low down in the scale of civilisation, and surrounded by cruel despotisms on all sides, should have produced a national constitution which still, in many respects, transcends that of the most advanced and civilised nations. The late Professor Huxley was certainly not biassed in favour of the Hebrew or Christian Scriptures; yet he has recorded this as his deliberate conviction: "There is no code of legislation, ancient or modern, at once so just and merciful, so tender to the weak and poor, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus."† It must not be thought, therefore, that the recognition of the human element in the Mosaic Law involves a low estimate of the inspiration which produced it.

The student, then, who would profitably study the laws of the Hexateuch must ever keep clearly in mind that they took existing institutions as their starting-point. They constituted a code that was above all things practical, and which aimed not so much at the best which is ideally conceivable, but at the best possible under the circumstances which then

* BUDGE'S *Dwellers on the Nile.*

† *Essays upon Controverted Subjects.*

existed. Their merits are to be discovered, not by comparing them with the perfect law of righteousness which we have in the teachings of our Lord, but by measuring them with the standards which were current among civilised nations when Israel came out of Egypt.

I. POLITICAL LAWS

The Theocracy.—Ideally the government of Israel was a Theocracy: "The Lord was their King" (1 Sam. xii. 12). This continued to be so even under the monarchy, and accordingly the Prophets did not hesitate, when necessary, to interfere in the name of their Master, both in home affairs and in foreign politics. The laws now to be considered, therefore, are the laws of the Theocracy, which emanated from Moses, and had received the sanction of God Himself.

The Congregation or Assembly.—From several passages in the Hexateuch it becomes clear that some sort of representative system obtained in Israel in early times. It seems to have consisted of elders or heads, who were probably hereditary chiefs of tribes and families, and judges or officers, who were possibly men selected for their learning and wisdom. A list of the former is given in Numbers i. 5–16, and they are described as "renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel" (*v.* 16). That there were many subordinate chieftains in addition to these becomes apparent from the account of the rebellion of Korah (Num. xvi.), where among the rebels were "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." What exactly the functions of the "assembly" or "congregation" were we do not clearly know, but apparently they were convened when any crisis occurred in national affairs for mutual council and deliberation. Thus when Joshua had completed his work in the conquest of Canaan he "called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers" (Joshua xxiii. 2). And again at Shechem, in extreme old age,

immediately before his death, there was a similar convocation of the assembly (xxiv. 1). Such an assembly could hardly have existed without having executive as well as deliberative functions; but the Hexateuch gives but one instance of such functions being exercised. The Gibeonites by fraud induced the assembly to conclude a treaty with them (Joshua ix. 15), and though the people were naturally indignant when they ascertained the facts, yet they recognised the act of the assembly as binding upon the whole nation, and acquiesced accordingly (ix. 18, 19).

The Sanhedrin was a court of seventy appointed to help Moses bear the burden of government (Num. xi. 16, 17). Its functions were probably judicial only. It was a temporary council, and had no connection with the Sanhedrin of later ages.

Land Laws.—The land laws under the Theocracy, which were of a very remarkable character, may be summarised in a few words. The system may be described as a combination of socialism and individualism, with special precautions against the land falling into the hands of a few great landowners; for however it may be in our country there can be no doubt that such a state of things would have been disastrous under the primitive agricultural conditions of the East. The keynote of the whole treatment of land is found in these words: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity: for *the land is Mine;* for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Lev. xxv. 23). God, if we may reverently say so, held the soil of Palestine as trustee for the whole of His people. No man could say that the fields he cultivated were absolutely his own. When the season of harvest came round the law forbade the farmer to reap the corners of his field (Lev. xix, 9, 10), or to go back and fetch a sheaf if it were forgotten (Deut. xxiv. 19), or to be strict in collecting either the grapes or the olives or the wheat, and whatever was left the poor might claim (Deut. xxiv. 20–22). At any time the poor might eat their fill in any man's

cornfield or vineyard, provided they did not use a sickle or carry anything away in a vessel (Deut. xxiii. 24, 25). In every seventh or sabbatical year the common ownership became still more apparent, for in that year the crops which grew, of whatever kind they were, did not belong to the owner of the land, but were common property, and even the beasts of the field had a right to them (Exod. xxiii. 11; Lev. xxv. 2–7). The acquisition of huge estates was impossible, for in the year of Jubilee, that is in every fiftieth year, all the land was restored to its original owners;* and however wide a man's dominions may have grown, they shrank in that year to their original dimensions (Lev. xxv. 8–16, 23–35).

In their details, of course, these laws are not applicable to us, for the conditions of England in our day differ widely from those of the East three or four thousand years ago. But the principles which underlay this system must certainly be immutable, and these seem to be that the interests of the individual ought not to be allowed to override that of the society of which he is a unit, and that every system of land tenure should be so framed as to be beneficial to the whole community, and not merely to a limited class in it. It is by these principles that every land system existing or prospective must be judged. And it must be remembered that these principles are as emphatically asserted by modern political economists as by the inspired legislation of Israel. What is now an axiom of social science was four thousand years ago a guiding principle of Mosaic Legislation. "No laws, no customs, no rights of property are so sacred that they may not be made away with if it can be clearly shown that they stand in the way of the greatest happiness of the greatest number."†

* Houses in the country and in the Levitical cities came under the same law as the land, but not so houses in walled cities. For the rules applicable to land which had been "sanctified unto the Lord," whether by owner or tenant, see Leviticus xxvii. 16–25.

† Stanley Jevons.

Military Laws.—There was no standing army in Israel, but it appears that all able-bodied men from twenty years and upwards were liable for service unless under exceptional circumstances (Num. i. 3; xxvi. 2). Occasionally the whole nation was called to arms (Judges xx.; 1 Sam. xi.), but more often a levy was made of only so many troops as were necessary for the particular campaign in hand. Thus we find Moses requisitioning 12,000 men, a thousand from each tribe, for war against the Midianites (Num. xxxi. 4, 5). And when according to the census there must have been in Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh at least 100,000 men capable of bearing arms, only 40,000 assisted their brethren in the conquest of their inheritance (Joshua iv. 13).

Certain classes of men were exempted from service, and the rules regarding these were so framed as to save the country from many of the evils which compulsory service often entails upon a nation. The classes exempted were—

(1) *Those who had built a new house but had not dedicated it* (Deut. xx. 5). A new house often meant a new estate, and this if neglected at the time when it was first inclosed would inflict an injury upon the prosperity of the country.

(2) *Those who had planted a vineyard and had not eaten of it* (Deut. xx. 6). As it takes some years for a newly planted vine to bear freely, this conferred a considerable reward upon those who thus added to the resources of the country. If all the able-bodied men had been drawn from the fields, a long campaign would probably have been followed by a famine.

(3) *Those who were betrothed* (Deut. xx. 7) *or newly married* (Deut. xxiv. 5). The bridegroom under such circumstances was not to be torn from the embraces of the bride: "He shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife whom he hath taken." This was not merely a merciful enactment; it encouraged marriage, and so helped to keep up the population which the sanguinary wars of ancient times did so much to thin.

(4) *Those who were fearful and fainthearted* (Deut. xx. 8). This is indeed a striking provision to find in the code of

an ancient and warlike people. The Mosaic Legislation probably stands alone in recognising that physical timidity is a defect rather than a vice, and is deserving of pity rather than of the contumely and insult with which it is usually visited. There was also a politic side to the enactment; cowardice is apt to be infectious, and in any case an army is not strengthened, but weakened, by the presence of soldiers who cannot be relied upon to face danger.

Two very formidable sources of danger and weakness to armies are fornication, with its resultant diseases, and unsanitary conditions. Each of these causes has been known in recent British campaigns to place more troops *hors de combat* than would a sanguinary battle. Ceremonial law was enforced while the troops were in the field which would be effectual in preventing fornication (Deut. xxiii. 10, 11), and by another enactment it was provided that every soldier should act as his own sanitary engineer (Deut. xxiii. 12, 13).

In ordinary cases the Israelites were permitted to take as spoil not only live stock and booty, but even the women and children (Deut. xx. 14; xxi. 10, 11; Num. xxxi. etc.). It was wisely decreed that things inanimate should belong to those who seized them; for if the law had demanded that these should be given up it would certainly have led to concealment and fraud. As regards the cattle and captives, however, the law was different. These were collected together and divided into two parts—one half went to the army, with the exception of a five-hundredth part of it which was reserved for the priests; the other half belonged to the nation, except a fiftieth part which went to the Levites (Num. xxxi. 25–31; cf. Joshua xxii. 8). This law seems to have fallen into desuetude in the time of the monarchy.

II. SOCIAL LAWS

Marriage, etc.—Polygamy was probably universal in the East in the time of Moses. The Mosaic Legislation did not prohibit it, but it certainly discouraged it. It was forbidden even to kings to have many wives (Deut. xvii. 17), and it was

therefore certainly forbidden to their subjects. Wherever harems are tolerated it is found that eunuchs become a necessity, but the law not only forbade Israelites to become eunuchs (Lev. xxii. 24, R.V.), but it enacted that no eunuch imported from a foreign country could be naturalised (Deut. xxiii. 1). Further it decreed that if a second wife were taken, the husband must not only continue to treat the first wife as handsomely as before, but must not diminish his "duty of marriage" towards her (Exod. xxi. 10). Presumably the same law would apply if a man married a third or a fourth wife, and when we consider in conjunction with this certain laws of purification connected with marital relations (Lev. xv. 18) it becomes clear that it would be practically impossible for anyone who observed the Mosaic Law to have more than two or three wives. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that after the Babylonish captivity, when an endeavour was made to keep the Law strictly, monogamy became the rule, though among the wealthy and irreligious exceptions could still be found.

Marriage with near of kin was forbidden much as it is among ourselves (Lev. xviii. 6–18), but to this the "Levirate Law" formed a curious exception. In conformity with a custom common to several Eastern nations in ancient times, a childless wife on the death of her husband was married to her brother-in-law, and the first child that was born was reckoned to the deceased (Deut. xxv. 5–9). Prohibitions applying to special classes were as follows:—(*a*) The High Priest could only marry an Israelitish virgin (Lev. xxi. 13, 14). (*b*) No priest was allowed to marry a prostitute or a woman who had been divorced (Lev. xxi. 7). (*c*) Heiresses could only marry men of their own tribe (Num. xxxvi. 5–9).

It is a mistake to suppose that the Israelites were never allowed to marry foreigners. They might not, indeed, take Canaanitish women as their wives (Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3, 4), but it is explicitly recorded that they might wed women captured in war (Deut. xxi. 10–14), who would, of course, be compelled to relinquish their idolatry when received into the

household of their captors. There were, indeed, certain restrictions in the case of Ammonites and Moabites (Deut. xxiii. 3), and of a less stringent kind in the case of Edomites and Egyptians (Deut. xxiii. 7, 8), but even these were not an absolute bar to intermarriage.

In one respect, at least, the Mosaic Law was more just and merciful than that of Christian nations. In the case of seduction it did not decree that all the shame and misery should be borne by the weaker partner in the sin. A man who was guilty either of rape or seduction was compelled to marry his victim. If, however, the father of the wronged woman refused to accept him as a son-in-law, he had to pay a fine in lieu of marriage (Exod. xxii. 16, 17; Deut. xxii. 28, 29). No fine was imposed on the woman, for she was considered to be sufficiently punished by the disgrace she had incurred. In the case of rape the fine was much heavier in amount, viz. fifty shekels of silver. The Mosaic Law was very careful, too, in safeguarding the rights of wives (Exod. xxi. 10, 11; Deut. xxi. 15–17, etc.), such safeguards being specially necessary where polygamy prevails.

The easy divorce which was permitted in ancient Israel (Deut. xxiv. 1–4) was, as we know on the highest authority (Matt. xix. 7, 8), a concession due to the hardness of men's hearts. The woman so put away might marry another husband, but might never return to the first.

The whole trend of this legislation was to encourage marriage, for children were looked upon as a special blessing, and to increase the nation was one of the objects of the Mosaic polity. Perpetual virginity was not regarded as an ideal state among the Chosen People, but rather as a disgrace (Judges xi. 37). No order of celibates existed among them, for the Nazirites were absolutely free to marry; Samuel, for example, was a married man (1 Sam. viii. 1).

It only remains to note that we must not think of the women of ancient Israel as living lives of repression and bondage such as women in the East now live. From Genesis xii. 14, xxiv. 16, and many other passages it is clear that the

married and unmarried alike went about unveiled. That women often played an important part in public affairs we may gather from the histories of Miriam, Deborah, etc. The ideal matron of Israel as sketched for us in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, is a capable and energetic ruler of her household, and contrasts strongly with the languid and childish women to be found in Eastern harems to-day. There can be little doubt, in fact, that the maidens and wives of Israel enjoyed almost as much freedom and independence as do those of Western nations now.

Slavery.—Slavery, of course, was universal in the time of Moses, and he dealt with it as with other pernicious customs; he did not abolish it—the times were not ripe for that—but he moralised it. Slaves were of two classes: (*a*) foreign slaves who had been captured in war (Deut. xx. 14, etc.); (*b*) Hebrew slaves. An Israelite could become a slave in various ways. He may have been sold because unable to pay his debts, or he could become a slave voluntarily through poverty (Lev. xxv. 47). He might have been sold by his parents (Exod. xxi. 7), and though this at first sight may seem a harsh law it must be remembered that infanticide was very common among ancient nations, and it was certainly better that parents too poor to support their children should sell them into that very modified form of slavery that existed among the Hebrews than that their little ones should be either destroyed or insufficiently fed and clothed. If a man was married before he became a slave the marriage was held sacred. If, however, his master supplied him with a concubine, his offspring were known as "sons of the house" (Gen. xv. 3), and remained the master's property.

Manstealing was among the heinous crimes punishable with death (Exod. xxi. 16). It will be thus seen that the Law of Moses afforded no sanction to the methods by which slaves have been provided in modern times.

The laws relating to Hebrew slaves were as follows:—

(1) All were freed in the seventh year of their servitude

(Exod. xxi. 2), or, if that happened to come earlier, in the year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 39–55).

(2) When they obtained their freedom their wives and children were set free also (Exod. xxi. 3), and the master was bound to give them some property with which to begin life anew (Deut. xv. 14, etc.).

(3) The slave might hold property, and even redeem himself (Lev. xxv. 49).

(4) If a Hebrew girl became a slave her master must not put her to rough work, like a man (Exod. xxi. 7). If he took her to his bed, and afterwards discarded her, he could not sell her to a strange nation, but would let her be redeemed (*v.* 8). If he gave her to his son as a wife he must treat her like a daughter (*v.* 9). Or if, having married her, he took a second wife, he must continue to treat her with the same liberality as before (*v.* 10).

(5) The command which was to govern all the master's conduct to his enslaved fellow-countrymen was as follows: "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God" (Lev. xxv. 43).

The other laws, which did not refer solely to Hebrew slaves, were as follows:—

(1) When a woman was captured in war, and her captor wished to make her his wife, he must first allow her a month to bewail her father and mother. And if afterwards he tired of her he could not make merchandise of her, but must give her her freedom (Deut. xxi. 10–14).

(2) If a slave died under the rod the master was punished (Exod. xxi. 20).

(3) When a slave was maimed by his master he forthwith obtained his freedom (Exod. xxi. 26, 27).

(4) It was specially enacted that the Sabbath rest was for slaves of both sexes (see Deut. v. 14, 15).

(5) Slaves were to have their share in the joyful feasts which were so remarkable a feature in the Mosaic Dispensation (Deut. xii. 17, 18; xvi. 11).

Anyone who carefully studies these enactments will see how

much they transcend in mercy and justice the slavery laws which prevailed among Christian nations even in the nineteenth century.

Day Labourers.—The law relating to these runs thus: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are in the land within thy gates: at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee" (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; see also Lev. xix. 13).

The Poor.—The Law of Moses jealously guarded the people against abject poverty or poverty of a hopeless kind. The Divine promise was: "There shall be no poor with thee . . . if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day" (Deut. xv. 4, 5, R.V.). An examination of the various enactments shows that if they had been strictly observed penury would indeed have been unknown. Of course, as the law was only imperfectly observed, it happened according to the Lord's prediction: "The poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deut. xv. 11); but the nearer the nation approximated to perfect obedience the rarer poverty became. A debtor had the opportunity of a fresh start in life every seventh year (Deut. xv. 13, 14, etc.), and in no case could he be brought face to face with starvation. Beggars were practically unknown in ancient Israel, for, at the worst, a man sold himself into slavery for a time, and the Law provided that he should be well treated in this condition. The utter destitution which is comparatively common among us could scarcely have existed under the Mosaic Dispensation, as a glance at some of the merciful provisions of the Pentateuch will show.

(1) When a small farmer falls into poverty it is of little use to give him doles; these will only render him more thriftless. A loan, however, may be of the greatest service, and may

enable him to recover himself. The Hebrews were therefore commanded to be very liberal in lending to the poor (Deut. xv. 7–11).

(2) If the borrower was *poor*, no interest was to be taken even from a *stranger*, *i.e.* a resident foreigner (Lev. xxv. 35–37; Exod. xxii. 25).

(3) The land laws, as already pointed out, were so framed that the farm could not be permanently alienated from its owner, and the rights of gleaning were very liberal, especially in every seventh year, when all the land became for a time public property (see *ante*, p. 55 f.).

(4) A widow's raiment could not be taken in pledge (Deut. xxiv. 17).

(5) Neither could a millstone be taken in pledge, for in a primitive state of society, where each one grinds his own corn, this would lead to great hardship (Deut. xxiv. 6).

(6) If garments were given as security by the poor, they were to be lent back at night; for the nights in the East are often cold, and the outer garment is used as a coverlet (Exod. xxii. 26, 27).

(7) It would appear that the recovery of a loan from a fellow-countryman could not be enforced in the seventh year (Deut. xv. 1–3, 9). It is uncertain whether this means that the debt was to be cancelled, or only that proceedings were deferred till the eighth year. In the time of Josephus it would appear that it was only in the year of Jubilee (fiftieth year) that debts were cancelled (*Antiq.* III. xii. 3).

(8) The widow and orphan were to be invited to partake in all the numerous festivals of Israel as well as to share in certain tithes (Deut. xiv. 28, 29; xvi. 10, 11; xxvi. 12, 13). The lives even of the poorest were therefore not joyless.

Old Age.—*Honour was to be paid to old age* (Lev. xix. 32).

Strangers and Foreigners.—The rigid exclusiveness of the Jews at the commencement of the Christian era was of comparatively recent growth, and had no place in the Mosaic Legislation, which contemplated the presence of the "stranger,"

or naturalised foreigner, as a part of the nation. We are distinctly told that God said He would not drive out all the Canaanites (Judges ii. 3, 21), and in the case of the Jebusites we find a small clan of the original inhabitants remaining side by side with their conquerors (Joshua xv. 63). The occurrence of such names as Araunah the Jebusite and Uriah the Hittite in the history of Israel is confirmatory of the earlier records, and if the Chronicler may be relied on, these naturalised foreigners amounted in Solomon's reign to about a tenth of the whole population (2 Chron. ii. 17).

The laws concerning these resident aliens were conceived in a most liberal spirit. With the exceptions already mentioned they could intermarry with the Hebrews and enjoy full civil rights. They were to be under exactly the same laws as the Chosen People (Lev. xxiv. 22). The Hebrews were to reckon them as of their own race, and to love them as themselves (Lev. xix. 33, 34). And, indeed, as a weak class needing special protection, God took them under His peculiar care: "God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut. x. 18, 19).

It thus becomes clear that the Mosaic Law enjoined only such exclusiveness as was necessary to ensure the preservation of a spiritual monotheism, and this was pronounced to be compatible with the utmost liberality and generosity to those who desired to settle within the borders of the land of Israel.

Usury.—The Israelites were strictly and repeatedly forbidden to take interest on loans from their fellow-countrymen (see *e.g.* Lev. xxv. 35–37 R.V.); and in later ages the pious man was defined as "he that hath not given his money upon usury" (Ps. xv. 5). The advantages of this enactment are easily seen. The usurer is the great curse of Eastern lands, and his presence quickly creates those extremes of poverty and riches to prevent which was one of the prime purposes of Mosaic legislation. Moreover, we must remember that Israel was intended to remain an isolated nation, and to this end it was

necessary that it should be self-supporting: the laws were so framed, therefore, as to make and keep its people agriculturists, and to discourage them from becoming traders. For small farmers a large capital is unnecessary; if they get into difficulties the best way to help them is to give a small advance on easy terms, and the legislation of Moses facilitated this. Where we give alms the ancient Israelite was commanded (Deut. xv. 7, 8) to give a free loan, and there can be no doubt as to which is the wiser means of affording help. Now, if by lending their money elsewhere they could have obtained interest, this would have been a hardship; but where interest was out of the question, men were as willing to lend small sums of money without reward as they are now willing to lend books. It would have been a hardship, again, to compel men to lend money without interest if they ran any risk in doing so; but every man had to offer as security his land (which could not be permanently alienated), his personal effects, and himself and family (for he and his could be sold for debt). Beyond the value of this security, no prudent man would lend, and lending within this value he ran no risk. It will thus be seen that the law prohibiting usury among the Israelites served several good purposes; it prevented men from falling into penury, helped to preserve that isolation of Israel which was necessary for the preservation of the true religion, and promoted charity of the most helpful kind.

The law did not forbid the Israelites to take interest from foreigners. In later centuries, when intercourse with the outward world became more general, this doubtless made the prohibition inoperative.

It is clear that this law would not apply to a manufacturing or trading nation; it would only work where each man has his own plot of ground, and can supply the necessaries of life by his own industry. Millions in our country own nothing but their strength and capacity, and without capital these would go unemployed, and they would perish. Similarly those who have money but no land, if they could not put it out to interest, would soon come to the end of their resources and be reduced

to poverty. But the *spirit* of the law of Moses certainly forbids the taking of immoderate interest. Even when such immoderate interest is derived from some industry, and not from usury, it will almost certainly follow that *someone* has been defrauded—either the employés underpaid or the public overcharged. Moreover, it is clearly as much the object of the Christian polity as of the Mosaic to prevent the extremes of poverty and riches; and immoderate interest, now as of old, promotes these.

Kindness to Animals.—In some Christian countries the duty of kindness to animals is entirely ignored, and its observance even in our own country is of comparatively recent growth. But the Laws of Moses, more especially by the kindly *sentiment* underlying them, inculcated kindness to helpless creatures as a religious duty. Thus—

(1) If an ass fell under its burden the pious Hebrew was to go to its assistance, even if it belonged to his enemy (Exod. xxiii. 5).

(2) If an ox, ass, or sheep was found straying far from its owner, the finder was to take it to his house and take care of it till he could restore it (Deut. xxii. 1–3).

(3) The ox that trod out the corn was not to be muzzled (Deut. xxv. 4).

(4) The dam was not to be deprived of her young for at least seven days from its birth (Lev. xxii. 27, 28).

(5) It was forbidden to seethe a kid in its mother's milk (Exod. xxiii. 19).

(6) When a mother bird was found sitting on a nest with young the fledgelings might be taken, but the mother bird must be allowed to escape (Deut. xxii. 6, 7). No doubt this law had a *practical* purpose in the preservation of game, but clearly it meant also that the mother-instinct which delivered the bird into the hand of the finder was to be respected.

(7) Rest was claimed for ox and ass on the Sabbath as for man (Exod. xx. 10), and similarly in the sabbatical year the proceeds of the fields were to be free to domestic animals, as to all comers (Lev. xxv. 7).

Plainly these laws were not intended to be a complete code, but rather to indicate the kind of feeling with which men were to regard the creatures God has put into their power.

Wearing Apparel.

(1) Each sex was forbidden to wear the apparel of the other (Deut. xxii. 5).

(2) They were not to wear garments of flax and wool combined (Lev. xix. 19; Deut. xxii. 11). The reason is difficult to discover, unless it was a symbolical way of reminding them that they were to keep themselves uncontaminated by mixture with other nations. *

(3) They were to wear fringes on their garments, and on the fringes a cord of blue which was to signify holiness unto the Lord (Num. xv. 37–40).

(4) Apparently they were to wear on hand and forehead amulets inscribed with texts (Deut. vi. 8).

Houses.

(1) A parapet was to be built around the roof of all new houses (Deut. xxii. 8). This was to prevent falls from the flat roofs which were much frequented in the cool of the day.

(2) Texts were to be inscribed on the posts of the doors (Deut. vi. 9).

Personal Appearance.

(1) Tattooing was forbidden (Lev. xix. 28).

(2) The Israelites were not allowed to trim their hair in a round form, nor to "mar" the corners of their beards (Lev. xix. 27). It is said that the Arabs cut the hair of their temples away in honour of a god whose characteristics were somewhat similar to those of Bacchus, and that this accounts for the Mosaic command. It is more probable that both prohibitions were intended to distinguish the Israelites from

* Probably enactments designed to teach symbolically the same lessons were those forbidding to sow fields with mixed seed (Lev. xix. 19; Deut. xxii. 9), or plough with ox and ass yoked together (Deut. xxii. 10). So St. Paul, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."

surrounding nations, and so remind them that they were a "peculiar people."

(3) The Israelites were not to cut or otherwise disfigure themselves for the dead (Deut. xiv. 1). The custom was so common that the Jews seem to have adopted it in later ages in spite of the Mosaic prohibition (see Jer. xvi. 6).

III. THE DECALOGUE

A moral glow suffuses the whole of the Mosaic Legislation, but so far as morality took the form of definite laws it expresses itself in the Decalogue, which is set forth in Exodus xx., and still more beautifully in Deuteronomy v. When considered in their strict literal meaning, some of these commandments need to be spiritualised and extended before they become suitable to Christians. Thus the first commandment enjoined monotheism, the second forbade the Israelites to make either pictures or images, a prohibition very necessary for a race which could be described as "the fewest of all peoples" (Deut. vii. 7) if they were to resist the force of the example of all the nations around them.* The third commandment only meant, originally, that men were not to perjure themselves, for Christ Himself quoted it as equivalent to the command, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thy vows" (Matt. v. 33). The fourth commandment bade Israel hallow the seventh day in commemoration of God's resting—a law clearly temporary, for the Christian Church has substituted a different day and a different motive for its observance. But still these ancient laws have only to be dealt with as Christ dealt with them (Matt. v. 21, 22; 27, 28; 33–36)—spiritualised, extended, and read in a sense applicable to modern conditions—and they will be found to express the fundamental moral basis of

* It would appear that this law was rigidly observed, except when set aside by God's express command, as in the construction of the Tabernacle and the Temple. The land of Israel yields none of those images and sculptured stones so numerous in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt.

all true religion. A hint of the true method of interpretation is afforded by the Decalogue itself, for the tenth commandment teaches that we are to consider the eighth commandment as not applying merely to the outward acts, but to the secret desires of the heart.

IV. RELIGIOUS LAWS AND LAWS RELATING TO RITUAL

Circumcision. — Circumcision was enjoined by God on Abraham and all his descendants (Gen. xvii. 9–14), but it is possible that it existed before his time, just as baptism existed before it was instituted as a sacrament by Christ. There can be little doubt that it prevailed in Egypt from very early times. So we are told by Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Herodotus, and indications of the fact are to be found in the Bible itself. Thus Jeremiah certainly seems to couple Egypt with Judah as uncircumcised in heart while circumcised in the flesh (Jer. ix. 25, 26, R.V.); and when all the Israelites who had been born during the wanderings in the wilderness were circumcised under Joshua, God said, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you," as though their previous state of uncircumcision had made them deserving, in a sense, of the taunts of their late masters (Joshua v. 9). It is undoubted, in any case, that circumcision was anciently observed by several nations besides the descendants of Abraham, but "it certainly belonged to the Jews as it did to no other people by virtue of its Divine institution, of the religious privileges which were attached to it, and of the strict regulations which enforced its observance." Those commanded to be circumcised were—

(*a*) All males of Israel (Lev. xii. 3).

(*b*) All bondservants of Israel (Exod. xii. 44).

(*c*) All strangers who wished to partake of the Passover (Exod. xii. 48).

It seems that a "stranger" might be a worshipper of Jehovah (1 Kings viii. 41–3) and observe all the Law of Moses, with one exception, without being circumcised, and this was certainly held to be the case in the time of Josephus (see

Antiquities, book xx. chap. ii.); but if he wished to *keep the Passover*, then circumcision was a necessity, much as Confirmation among ourselves is held to be an indispensable preliminary to the reception of Holy Communion.

Origen, who was a native of Egypt, tells us in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans that circumcision was obligatory there only on *the priests*. If this was so in ancient times, circumcision may have signified to the Israelites that they were to be *a nation of priests*. It certainly was an ever-present reminder to them of their covenant with God, and of the purity that was demanded of them. The spiritual significance underlying the carnal ordinance was apparent to Israel from the very earliest times, as is evident from the command in Deuteronomy x. 16: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart." (See also Lev. xxvi. 41.)

All attempts to discover some physical or sanitary advantage in circumcision have proved abortive.

The Hierarchy.—The elaborate ritual observed at the consecration of a High Priest is fully described in Leviticus viii. He first underwent ceremonial purification by washing, was next invested with the vestments pertaining to his office, and was then copiously anointed with the sacred oil. Finally a bullock was offered as a sin-offering, and two rams as a burnt- and a peace-offering.

His special duties were to consult the mysterious Urim and Thummim (Num. xxvii. 21), to preside over the priestly Judicial Court (Deut. xvii. 9, 12), and entering the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, to sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering on the mercy-seat, and burn incense within the veil.

The vestments of the high priest were of a gorgeous description, and were wrought with splendid colours and gold. Upon his head he wore a mitre with a gold plate attached, upon which was inscribed *Holiness to the Lord;* upon his breast was a bag adorned with twelve precious stones, each engraved with the name of a tribe, and in this bag was carried the *Urim and Thummim* (Light and Perfection), by which the

Divine will was consulted. The nature of this latter object is unknown. Upon each shoulder of the high priest was an onyx stone, bearing the names of six tribes. (For a full account of the vestments of the high priest and the ceremonies attending his consecration, see Exodus xxviii.). On the Day of Atonement, however, these gorgeous robes were laid aside, and the high priest performed his solemn duties clad only in white linen.

The Priests.—The priests, the sons of Aaron (Exod. xxviii. 1), performed their ministry only as representing the people, who were "a kingdom of priests" (Exod. xix. 6). They were consecrated, like the high priest, with purification, investiture, and anointing, followed by sacrifice; but the anointing was less copious in their case. Their duties were to keep the fire ever burning on the altar of burnt-offering (Lev. vi. 12, 13), and to trim and feed the golden lamp (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21); to offer the daily sacrifices morning and evening (Exod. xxix. 38–44); to put fresh shewbread on the table every seventh day (Lev. xxiv. 8); to proclaim all solemn days by blowing the silver trumpets (Num. x. 1–10); to act as judges (Deut. xvii. 9–13), and to teach the Law (Lev. x. 11).

The vestments of the priests were of a comparatively simple kind, consisting of linen drawers, a white tunic or cassock, without seam, reaching to the feet, a girdle interwoven with the three sacred colours, blue, purple, and scarlet, and a white linen mitre formed like the calyx of a flower (Exod. xxviii. 40–2; xxxix. 27–30). It would appear that they ministered barefooted.

The priests received for their support a tenth of the tithes* (Num. xviii. 21, 26–8), the firstfruits of oil, corn, and wine (Num. xviii. 12), the redemption money (five shekels) for the firstborn of man or beast (Num. xviii. 14, 15), and also certain perquisites of the altar, as the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 9), the

* This tenth of the tithe was originally to be given "to Aaron"; this might mean in later times either to the high priest or to the priests as a class.

flesh of burnt-, peace-, and trespass-offerings (Num. xviii. 8–14; Lev. x. 12–15). Apparently, also, they received a certain proportion of the spoils of war (Num. xxxi. 25–30). To the priests also were assigned thirteen cities, including the Cities of Refuge.

The Levites.—The Levites were the assistants of the priests. They were divided into three families or clans—*Kohathites*, *Gershonites*, and *Merarites*. Of these, during the Wanderings, the Kohathites bore the ark and sacred vessels, the Gershonites the curtains, etc., and the Merarites the heavier and more cumbersome parts of the Tabernacle (see Num. iv.). The Levites entered upon their duties when thirty years of age (Num. iv. 23, etc.), and were set aside by a simple ceremony consisting of ceremonial lavation followed by sacrifices and the laying on of hands of the elders of the congregation (Num. viii. 5–14). At the age of fifty they retired from the more active duties of their office (Num. viii. 25, 26).

Their duties were to assist the priests generally, but not themselves to sacrifice nor burn incense; to preserve the Law (Deut. xxxi. 24–7), and to read it publicly once in every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. xxxi. 9–14). Apparently they took the place of the old household priests who had existed before the tribe of Levi was set aside, for it is again and again enjoined that they shall have their share in the household rejoicings at the great feasts (Deut. xiv. 26, 27, etc.).

This tribe had not a tract of country set aside for it, as did the others, but thirty-five cities with suburbs of pasture land were allotted to them. They received also nine-tenths of the tithes of land and cattle (Num. xviii. 24), and the people were expected to offer them every hospitality.

Sacrifices, Offerings, etc.—Sacrifices did not, of course, originate with the Mosaic Law. The custom was primitive, and so widespread that it would seem to have arisen from a natural instinct, implanted by God in human nature, rather than from an express revelation. This instinct, of course,

found its full satisfaction only in the expiatory offering made by Christ, and therefore in a perfectly natural manner sacrifices under the Mosaic Law were prefigurings of the Sacrifice of Calvary. As to the meanings to be attached to sacrifices, offerings, etc., we may be sure that as the custom of making such offerings was widespread, so the ideas expressed by them would be various. As regulated by Moses it would seem that *burnt-offerings* signified *complete self-dedication*, *peace-offerings and unbloody meat-offerings* were expressive of *thanksgiving*, *sin- and trespass-offerings* were *expiatory*, while incense typified the *intercessory prayers* of the priest for the people.

A. Bloody Sacrifices.

I. *Burnt-offerings* (expressive of self-dedication).—The victim, after the sacrificer had laid his hands upon it and slain it, was wholly consumed by fire. Only males could be offered, and the sacrifice must be accompanied by a "meat"-offering. A lamb was thus offered every morning and evening on behalf of the whole nation (Exod. xxix. 38–44).

II. *Sin- and Trespass-offering* (expiatory).—The offerer laid his hand upon the victim and confessed his sin over it, uttering a prayer for forgiveness. He then slew it, and the priest sprinkled its blood seven times on the horns of the Brazen Altar if for an individual, and seven times on the veil before the Ark and the horns of the Golden Altar of Incense if for the high priest or the congregation (Lev. iv.). The kind of victim varied according to circumstance: for the whole people a kid (Num. xxviii. 15); for priests and Levites at their consecration, or for the high priest on the Day of Atonement a young bullock (Exod. xxix. 11; Lev. xvi. 3); for a woman on purification after childbirth a young pigeon or turtle dove (Lev. xii. 6); at the cleansing of a leper a ewe lamb, unless he was very poor, when a less expensive offering was accepted (Lev. xiv. 21, etc.). Only the fat of the kidneys, the lobe of the liver, and in the case of a sheep the fat tail were burnt on the altar. The rest was eaten by the priest and the males of his family in the court of the Tabernacle (Lev. iv. 25–30). If, however, the

blood had been sprinkled in the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies, the carcass, except the pieces offered on the altar, was burnt without the camp (Lev. iv. 11, etc.). Sin- and trespass-offerings were not accompanied by a "meat"-offering. The sin-offering was for sins of ignorance, negligence, etc., the trespass-offering for some special or deliberate act of sin.

III. *Peace-offerings* (expressing thanksgiving) were of three kinds—thank-offerings (Lev. vii. 12), free-will offerings (*v.* 16), or vows (*v.* 16). The victim might be any clean animal, but not a bird, and must be accompanied by a "meat"-offering. The offerer laid his hands on the victim and slew it, and the priest then sprinkled the blood upon the altar, and the same parts were burnt as in the case of the sin- or trespass-offering. The right shoulder and breast were then waved before the Lord, and these became the priest's portion, but the remainder was returned to the offerer, who made a feast with it the same day (Lev. vii. 11–21). To this feast he would naturally ask many guests, as anything that was left on the third day was consumed by fire (*v.* 17).

B. **Unbloody Sacrifices.**

I. "*Meat*"-*offerings* (see Lev. ii.) consisted of fine flour, unleavened, mingled with frankincense and oil, and seasoned with salt. The frankincense and a little of the flour and oil were burnt upon the altar, the rest becoming the priest's portion. Cakes of fine flour, with salt and oil, could also be offered.

II. *Drink-offerings* consisted of wine, which was poured at the foot of the altar. With a bullock the offering was five pints (Num. xv. 9, 10), with a ram three and a half pints (Num. xv. 6, 7), with a lamb or kid two and a half pints (Exod. xxix. 40). It seems uncertain whether the whole was poured as a libation, or whether it was dealt with in the same manner as the "meat"-offerings, *i.e.* the greater part reserved for the priests' use.

III. *Incense* was most carefully prepared of four ingredients (Exod. xxx. 34–6), and any improper use of it was to be

punished with death (*vv.* 33, 38). It accompanied the "meat"-offering (Lev. ii.), was daily offered on the golden altar (Exod. xxx. 7, 8), and on the Day of Atonement was burnt in the Holy of Holies by the high priest (Lev. xvi. 13).

Tithes and Firstlings.

First Tithes.—The tenth of produce of fields, gardens, and herds was given to the Levites (Lev. xxvii. 30–3), and they gave one-tenth of it, *i.e.* one-hundredth of the whole, to the priests (Num. xviii. 25–8).

The Second Tithe.—It would seem that a second tithe was imposed every year, which was to be spent in festivities at Jerusalem (Deut. xii. 17–19). When the distance was too great to admit of carrying up the tithes of all the produce it might be exchanged for money (Deut. xiv. 25, 26), but the money must all be spent for the purposes of the festival—"for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth." To this feast were to be invited the family, the servants, and the Levite—the latter being looked upon as the household priest.

In the third year a difference was made. The festival was to be held at home, and not at Jerusalem ("within thy gates," Deut. xiv. 28); and on this occasion not only was the Levite to be invited, but also *the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow* (Deut. xiv. 28, 29; xxvi. 12).

First Firstlings.—God claimed all firstlings as His own (Exod. xiii. 2).

The eldest son was to be redeemed within a month of birth by payment of five shekels or less, according as the priest should decide (Num. xviii. 15, 16).

The firstlings of clean beasts were to be sacrificed; the blood to be sprinkled on the altar, the fat consumed by fire, and the flesh to be given to the priests (Num. xviii. 17, 18).

The firstlings of unclean beasts were to be redeemed by giving a sheep or goat instead, and if the owner would not redeem it, then its neck was to be broken (Exod. xiii. 13), or it should be sold (Lev. xxvii. 27).

Second Firstlings.—The Law clearly commanded that certain firstlings were to be used, just as was the second tithe; they were to be taken to Jerusalem and feasted upon by the family and the Levite (Deut. xv. 19, 20, etc.). As the actual firstlings had been dealt with in another manner, it would seem that this law referred really to the animal born immediately after the firstborn.

At first sight one is tempted to think that the second tithe and second firstlings *superseded* the first, since Deuteronomy, which professes to give the Law as it existed forty years later than its original promulgation on Sinai, speaks only of the second tithes, etc., while the other books speak only of the first. In point of fact, however, both Josephus and Maimonides bear witness that *both* tithes were levied, which would seem to show that Moses, in adding the new tithe, did not abrogate the old. It must be remembered, also, that the institution here spoken of as "second tithe" was not so much a tax as an enforcement of the duty of hospitality under religious sanction.

The word "firstlings," in its technical sense, refers only to males (Deut. xv. 19).

Firstfruits.—The firstfruits of harvest, vintage, etc., such as corn, oil, wine, wool, were to be given to the priest for his use at the giver's pleasure, no exact amount being fixed (Deut. xviii. 4, etc.).

Festal Firstfruits.—In addition to the firstfruits offered to the priests a basketful of field and garden fruits was to be taken to the feasts, and after having been consecrated to God, was to be eaten by the offerer and his friends. The festival was thus fully furnished forth (Deut. xxvi. 1–11).

The Sabbath.—One of the main purposes of the Sabbath was to ensure a time of recreation for workers of all kinds, so that ox and ass, servant and stranger might rest "and be refreshed" (Exod. xxiii. 12). Evasion of any kind was, therefore, strictly guarded against. It was forbidden even to kindle

a fire (Exod. xvi. 23; xxxv. 3) except for altar purposes (Lev. vi. 12, etc.), and any violation of the sabbatical law was punishable with death (Exod. xxxi. 14, 15; Num. xv. 32, 36). While, however, *work* of all kinds, and especially the imposition of work upon others, was strictly prohibited, it would probably be a mistake to suppose that any recreative activity of mind and body which did not involve work was forbidden. Even in our Lord's time, when, through the traditions of men, the Sabbath had taken on a gloomy character, the strictest of Pharisees could ask his friends to a meal (Luke xiv. 1), and evidently a meal of a somewhat pretentious character (*vv.* 7, 12), and doubtless earlier it was a day of considerable social intercourse. A man who made a business of collecting firewood on that day broke the Sabbath, but it was evidently no violation to pluck ears of corn or grapes during a country walk, nor, presumably, to pick up sticks casually if they lay at one's feet (Matt. xii. 1). The "Sabbath day's journey" was, of course, instituted in the time of Jewish pedantry, and there can be little doubt that in the earlier ages the Sabbath possessed such a joyous character as made it clear that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

We are not told whether religious services were held on the Sabbath in the time of Moses. It is clear, however, from the special sabbatical sacrifice (Num. xxviii. 9, 10), and from the enactment regarding the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 8), that the day had a religious character, and probably the instruction of the young in the Law formed a part of its duties from the first (Deut. vi. 7, etc.).

The Sabbath lasted from sunset to sunset.

Festivals and Fasts.

Festivals.—The festivals, which were very numerous, and of a very joyous character, formed a prominent feature in the life of ancient Israel. Including Sabbaths and New Moons, there were eighty-two sacred days in the Jewish year, fifty-nine of these being Sabbaths on which no work could be done, and the remainder (twenty-three) days of unrestricted mirth. The

people on these occasions acted in conformity with the command, "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast" (Deut. xvi. 14), and it is clear that they were marked by unbounded hospitality. That dancing, probably of a religious character, was indulged in at religious festivals we know from Judges xxi. 19–21, and the exhortations to "praise God's name in the dance" (Ps. cxlix. 3), which are not infrequent in the Old Testament, probably refer to these seasons of holy rejoicings.

The festivals, in addition to their religious significance, must have served certain social and political purposes. They provided recreation both for body and mind; they brought the members of the various tribes together and helped them to realise their national oneness, and without their abrogation separation between Israel and Judah would have been impossible. We may be sure, also, that they encouraged commerce: merchants would be certain to take advantage of the great concourse at Jerusalem during the feasts to display their wares, and the Israelites would there have the opportunity of purchasing foreign commodities which would otherwise hardly have reached them in their scattered rural homestead.

The Passover (Lev. xxiii.; Num. xxviii. 16–31; Deut. xvi. 1–16, etc.).—The origin of the Passover is too well known to need notice here. It began on the 14th day of *Nisan* or *Abib* (end of March or beginning of April), and was kept up till the 21st, and he who would not observe it was to be extirpated (Num. ix. 13). The Paschal lamb, without spot or blemish, was to be roasted whole, without any bone being broken, and was to be eaten by the Paschal company, who had clubbed together for the purpose, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. During the continuance of the festival only unleavened bread was to be used, and all leaven was to be removed from the houses.

The offerings were as follows:—

(*a*) *Burnt-offering* for the nation daily: two bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, with the usual "meat"-offering.

(*b*) *Sin-offering* for the nation: one goat.

(*c*) Individuals might also offer thank-offerings to the Lord.

The first and last days of the feast (15th and 21st days of Nisan or Abib) were days of Holy Convocation or Sabbaths, when no work might be done. Apparently, however, they were not observed so strictly as the ordinary Sabbath (Exod. xii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 7, etc.).

On the 16th Nisan a sheaf of ripe barley was waved before the Lord, and a lamb offered with a meat and drink-offering. Until this thanksgiving had taken place, no produce of the harvest could be eaten.

The Feast of Pentecost (Lev. xxiii. 15–21; Num. xxviii. 26, etc.; Deut. xvi. 9–12) was so called because it took place on the fiftieth day (seven whole weeks) from the 16th Nisan (when the first sheaf of barley was waved). Some parts of Palestine are much colder than others, and therefore the harvests do not all ripen at the same time. Seven weeks were therefore allowed to intervene from the ripening of the first barley in order that the harvest might be everywhere complete, and then the Feast of Pentecost or "Weeks," the great Harvest Festival, was observed. It lasted but a single day, which was a day of Holy Convocation. The following were its distinguishing features:—

(*a*) Two leavened loaves made from the new corn, and two lambs were waved before the Lord.

(*b*) The *burnt-offering* for the nation consisted of one bullock, two rams, and seven lambs, with the usual "meat" and drink-offerings.

(*c*) The *sin-offering* for the nation consisted of a kid.

(*d*) Each person was to make a freewill-offering according to his circumstances (Deut. xvi. 10). The gatherings at the Pentecostal Feast were wider than the family gatherings of the Passover. The Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were to be invited (Deut. xvi. 11).

Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 33–43; Num. xxix. 12–40; Deut. xvi. 13–15) commenced on the fifteenth of the seventh month, Tisri (about October), and was a thanksgiving for the ingathering of the vintage and fruits. It lasted seven days (Deut. xvi. 13, etc.), with an eighth day thrown in (Lev. xxiii.

36, etc.). It has been suggested that the eighth day is thus distinguished from the others because it was originally a separate festival, viz. the Wine Press Feast. The suggestion is plausible but, it must be confessed, is not supported by direct evidence. An alternative name for the Feast of Tabernacles is Ingathering (Exod. xxxiv. 22). During its continuance the people dwelt in booths of green boughs, and it was thus a commemoration of the time when Israel dwelt in tents in the wilderness (Lev. xxiii. 43). The first and last days were Holy Convocations, when no work might be done; but the other days were days of great rejoicing, when, as at the Feast of Pentecost, the widow, the orphan, and the slave were to share in the festivities. The offerings were very numerous: each day two rams and fourteen lambs were offered as a burnt-offering, and a kid for a sin-offering; and in addition to this no less than seventy bullocks were offered, thirteen on the first day, twelve on the second, and so on to seven on the seventh day.

In every seventh year the Book of Deuteronomy was to be read through in public at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. xxxi. 10–12).

Minor Festivals, New Moons (Num. xxviii. 11–15, etc.). —Each of the new moons was ushered in by the blowing of silver trumpets (see Num. x. 1–10), and was marked by the sacrifice of eleven additional victims. On the seventh month, Tisri (October), the new moon marked the commencement of the civil year, and this feast was therefore observed with special solemnity. The silver trumpets were more used on this day than any other (Num. xxix. 1–6), and it was therefore specially known as the *Feast of Trumpets*. It was a day of Holy Convocation, and the additional burnt-offerings were not eleven, but twenty, and a kid was also offered as a sin-offering.

The Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi.; xxiii. 26–32; Num. xxix. 7–11).—In contrast with the numerous festivals, there was but one fast day in the Jewish year—the Day of Atonement. The people indeed, in later times, appointed many other fast days, but this was without the Divine direction;

and God, by the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, abolished them (Zech. vii. 3–7; viii. 19). The one fast was, however, a day of peculiar solemnity, the only day on which the Holy of Holies was entered, and on which the high priest officiated alone. It occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month, Tizri—five days before the joyful Feast of Tabernacles. It was one of the days of Holy Convocation, or extra Sabbaths, and all the people were commanded, on pain of death, to *afflict their souls* with mourning and fasting. The high priest was commanded to buy at his own cost, as a sacrifice for the priesthood, a bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering, and with money taken from the public treasury to procure as a sacrifice for the people two he-goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. The ritual then observed was as follows:—

(*a*) The high priest having bathed and laid aside his gorgeous robes in exchange for garments of white linen, took the two he-goats to the door of the Tabernacle, and ascertained by lot which of them was to be *for Jehovah* and which *for Azazel.**

(*b*) He next slew the bullock as a sin-offering for himself and the priests, and taking a censer full of burning coals from the Altar of Burnt-offering and two handfuls of incense, he passed into the Holy of Holies. There he threw the incense upon the censer, thus enveloping the Mercy-seat in a fragrant cloud. Then returning to the Brazen Altar he took some of the blood of the bullock in a vessel into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it seven times before the Mercy-seat.

(*c*) He next took the goat upon which the lot *for Jehovah* had fallen, and offered it as a sin-offering for the people, sprinkling the blood before the Mercy-seat as he had done that of the bullock.

(*d*) He next purified the Holy Place by sprinkling the blood of both victims seven times on the horns of the Golden Altar of Incense.

* The meaning of Azazel is much disputed; the most likely explanations are that it was the name assigned to the desert to which the goat was to be sent, or else the name of the false god or evil spirit to which the goat was devoted.

(*e*) He then laid his hands upon the head of the goat on which had fallen the lot *for Azazel*, and confessed over it the sins of the people; and it was then led away by a chosen messenger into the desert, "a place not inhabited," where it was let loose. This messenger could not return into camp till he had purified himself.

(*f*) The high priest then again entered the Tabernacle, and having bathed and put on once more his gorgeous robes, offered the two rams as a burnt-offering for the priesthood and the people. At the same time he placed upon the altar the fat of the two sin-offerings, while the remainder of the victims were consumed by fire without the camp, and those deputed for this office could not return to camp till they had purified themselves.

The meaning of the typical ceremonies of the Day of Atonement is sufficiently unfolded in Hebrews ix.

IV. LAWS RELATING TO CEREMONIAL UNCLEANNESS

I. **Clean and Unclean Meats** (Lev. xi.; Deut. xiv.)

(*a*) Clean beasts were those that both divided the hoof and chewed the cud. The rest were looked upon as unclean and could not be eaten. The practical effect of this was to exclude all *carnivora*. Animals that had died from disease or had been torn by wild beasts were also unclean, and the latter were to be given to the dogs (Exod. xxii. 31).

(*b*) All birds were clean except about a score mentioned in Leviticus xi. and Deuteronomy xiv. These apparently were *raptores*.

(*c*) All fish were clean that had scales and fins; the remainder unclean.

(*d*) Of insects, locusts and certain of the locust tribe were clean, and were freely eaten in the East, but all other insects were unclean.

(*e*) Creeping things and worms were unclean.

It seems clear that we are not to regard these rules as emanating directly from God, but rather as the enactments

of a human law-giver who acted under the Divine sanction. The enumeration is not even strictly scientific, the hare and the camel being wrongly classified as creatures which both divide the hoof and chew the cud. As Michaelis has pointed out, the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" exists in every country; that is, there are some creatures which are freely eaten, and others which are looked upon with disgust. What Moses did, apparently, was to adopt the notions current among the Hebrews on this subject, and give to them a religious sanction. There may have been certain sanitary advantages in the promulgation of these enactments, but the chief benefit doubtless was that they helped still further to fence the Hebrews from surrounding nations (see Lev. xx. 25, 26), and to stamp them as a "peculiar" people, for it is certain that some of the animals forbidden to the Chosen People (*e.g.* the camel, dog, hare, etc.) were freely eaten by some of the nations around them. The term "unclean" meant little more than "not to be eaten"; it did not mean that the creatures so designated were to be avoided, for the camel and ass were of course used as beasts of burden and kindly treated. It is true that a dead "unclean" animal caused defilement, but that did not imply disgust for the living creature, for to touch a human corpse was also defiling.

The kidneys and the fat of the intestines could not be eaten (Lev. iii. 17, etc.), nor could the blood (Lev. xvii. 10–14; Deut. xii. 23, 24, etc.); and, indeed, the eating of blood was forbidden even to the "stranger" or foreign settler (Lev. xvii. 12, etc.). These prohibitions would not only tend, like the others, to discourage social intercourse with the heathen, but they had a religious significance. The kidneys and the fat of the intestines were offered on the altar, and so were sacred to Jehovah. So, too, "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11), and therefore blood could not be put to common uses.

II. **Uncleanness of Leprosy** (Lev. xiii., xiv.; Num. v. 1–4; Deut. xxiv. 8, 9).—The laws relating to lepers may be thus summarised:—

(1) A person suspected of this disease was required to submit himself to the inspection of the priest for seven days.

(2) If at the end of the seventh day the priest found that the eruption did not denote leprosy the suspect was pronounced clean.

(3) If proved to be unclean, the patient was separated from the people; when out of doors he was required to go with his clothes rent, his head bare, his chin covered, crying, "Unclean! unclean!" that all might know to avoid him.

(4) Whatsoever touched the leper became unclean.

(5) When the leprosy spread so as to cover the man from head to foot, he again became clean (Lev. xiii. 12, 13, 16, 17).

It is now quite certain that the leprosy of the Old Testament is *not* the awful and loathsome disease *elephantiasis*, in which the very limbs rot and drop off from the body, but a skin disease, or possibly several allied skin diseases, of a very much milder type. The minute accounts given in the Old Testament of leprosy do not in the least correspond to the symptoms of *elephantiasis*, and the confusion has mainly arisen through the same Latin term having come to be applied to two very different diseases, though probably it was not till the latter half of the eleventh century that the word *lepra* was used to denote *elephantiasis*, the horrible mediæval or true leprosy. Both St. Augustine and St. Isidore of Seville speak of the leprosy of their day in terms which are applicable to the Bible leprosy, but not in the least descriptive of *elephantiasis*. It would appear that some varieties of the Bible leprosy were infectious, and some not; and possibly when the disease covered a man from top to toe that was known to be a non-infectious variety, and so the man was pronounced clean and might mix with his fellows.

It would seem certain that leprosy was looked upon as a type of sin, and its treatment, besides any sanitary advantages it might have possessed, was a vivid parable of the growth of sin and its consequences.

Leprosy is spoken of in the Mosaic Law as attaching sometimes to clothes (Lev. xiii. 47–59) and houses (Lev. xiv. 33–47).

These, like the human subject, were to be submitted to the priest's inspection for seven days. If he pronounced leprosy to be present the expedient was first tried of cutting out a piece of the cloth or removing a few of the stones, but if it still spread the garment was burnt or the house pulled down. No doubt the term "leprosy" is here used analogically, to denote some efflorescence upon walls or stains on cloths, and there is admittedly sometimes a close resemblance between the fungus growths which disfigure masonry and those which, on the human epidermis, constitute some kinds of skin disease. But clearly the main object of this ceremonial law was to teach the Hebrew to hate even the *appearance* of evil, to shun not only things undisguisedly wicked, but even things doubtful.

Sexual Uncleanness (Lev. xv.; xii.).

(*a*) A man that had an unclean issue (xv. 2, 16) was unclean for seven days, and on the eighth day must cleanse himself, and offer two turtle-doves or young pigeons. Everything that he touched until his cleansing was rendered unclean.

(*b*) Co-ition involved impurity until the evening.

(*c*) A woman's defilement by an issue (xv. 19) involved the same consequences as an issue in the male.

(*d*) After childbirth a woman, if she had borne a son, was unclean in a stricter sense for seven days, and afterwards kept the house for another thirty-three days—forty in all. If she had borne a daughter the stricter uncleanness lasted fourteen days, the laxer sixty-six days—eighty in all. At the conclusion of the days of cleansing she offered a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon or turtle-dove for a sin-offering; or, if poor, she might substitute a turtle-dove or a pigeon for the lamb.

Moses in these laws probably adopted, or at least adapted, customs which existed in his time. Such laws would certainly help to create or fix ideals of purity, and in some respects would check vice and sensuality.

Defilement by Dead Bodies (Num. xix. 11–16).

All who touched a corpse, or went into the room where it was lying, or touched a grave or a bone, became ceremonially unclean for seven days. The cleansing of such uncleanness (Num. xix. 1–10, 17–22) was a very elaborate ceremony, involving the use of "water of uncleanness," made with the ashes of a red heifer which had never borne the yoke and was without blemish.

The practical advantages which would flow from these enactments were numerous:—

(*a*) It would in some cases prevent infection.

(*b*) It would lead to speedy burials, a matter of great importance in hot climates.

(*c*) The pauper and foes slain in battle would receive decent sepulture, and not be, as was common in the East, left to be consumed by jackals and vultures.

(*d*) Graves would be placed at a distance from towns and human habitation, so as to obviate defilement by touching them.

No doubt unclean animals would also be quickly buried, since to touch them also involved defilement. It need hardly be pointed out that this, too, from a sanitary point of view, was a great advantage.

Uncleanness of Vessels.

A vessel became unclean if certain unclean beasts fell into it (Lev. xi. 33), or if left uncovered in a room with a corpse (Num. xix. 15), or if touched by one suffering from gonorrhea (Lev. xv. 12), etc. If of earthenware the vessel was broken in pieces, and if of copper it was scoured.

V. CRIMINAL CODE

In its criminal code, as in much else, the ancient Mosaic Legislation was in advance of the practice of most Christian centuries. It did not indeed consciously aim at the reclamation of the criminal. The purpose of its punishments was

simply to deter (Deut. xvii. 13; xix. 20); but at least it took care that its penal laws did not permanently degrade the offender and manufacture criminals. It was able in the primitive state of its society to dispense with prisons, which do so much to make of crime a profession, and of criminals a class. It never banished its citizens, for that would have forced them to fall into idolatry; and the longest penalty that could befall a Hebrew was confinement for some years in a "City of Refuge," where there was complete liberty within certain limits. The Mosaic Code contained nothing so barbarous as the ordeal by fire, which prevailed for centuries in the Christian era; nothing so irrational as trial by combat; and torture for the purpose of extorting confession, which has prevailed among Christian nations in most diabolical forms, was quite unknown among the Hebrews. Moreover, great care was taken to preserve the innocent from unjust conviction. The spy and the informer were sternly discouraged. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord" (Lev. xix. 16). No man could be convicted but by the sworn testimony (Lev. v. 1) of "two or three witnesses" (Deut. xix. 15, etc.), and anyone who unjustly sought to inflict a punishment on another should on detection endure the same punishment himself (Deut. xix. 16–21).

The punishments inflicted were summary and comparatively merciful, and contrast favourably indeed with such cruelties as breaking on the wheel, and flaying alive, which long disgraced Europe.

Death was inflicted either by the *sword* (Deut. xiii. 13–15) or by *stoning*. In the latter form of execution the witnesses were to cast the first stone (Deut. xvii. 7), and this would strongly deter men from bearing false witness. *Hanging* and *burning* are also spoken of, but doubtless these were ignominies intended to be perpetrated on the dead bodies, as these are the only cases detailed in the Hexateuch (see *e.g.* Joshua vii. 25; Deut. xxi. 22; Joshua x. 26, etc.). A similar kind

of ignominy was erecting a cairn of stones over the dead criminal (Joshua vii. 26; viii. 29; 2 Samuel xviii. 17).

The crimes punishable with death included idolatry, blasphemy, and many trespasses against the Divine Law. Under the Theocracy these were similar to the crime of high treason in other nations, and they needed to be sternly dealt with if a spiritual monotheism was to be preserved. Other capital crimes were wilful murder, adultery, unnatural sins, most forms of incest, cursing or striking father or mother, etc. The number of capital offences depends upon whether or no the expression "cutting off" means in every case death, with no alternative. As regards many of the transgressions against the law so punished, it was apparently only when they were committed "with a high hand" (Num. xv. 30, R.V.), *i.e.* with open contempt for the Law, that they were looked upon as mortal crimes. Even when we include all these sins against the Law the number of capital offences must have been small indeed compared with the two hundred and twenty-three crimes for which death could be inflicted in England less than a century ago.

Whipping.—In contrast with the thousands of stripes which were sometimes inflicted in Christian countries not a century ago for comparatively slight offences, the Hebrew judge could order the infliction of no more than forty (Deut. xxv. 1–3). No peculiar degradation was attached to the punishment; indeed, the number of strokes was thus limited in order that the person punished should not be made to "seem vile" (*v.* 3).

Fines were inflicted for various injuries and offences, especially offences against property, which were not punished so savagely as in many Christian countries. Fines were of various kinds:—

(*a*) Fines of specified amount for certain offences (Deut. xxii. 19, 29) and injuries (Exod. xxi. 32).

(*b*) Fines fixed by arbitration (*e.g.* Exod. xxi. 22, 30).

(*c*) Restitution fivefold (Exod. xxii. 1), twofold (*v.* 4), or by the addition of a fifth (Lev. v. 16; vi. 5), etc.

As specimens of the crimes and offences which were thus punishable may be mentioned :—

Theft.—The thief must restore double or more, and if without means must be sold as a slave (Exod. xxii. 1, 3, 4).

Fraud.—On confession the fraudulent must restore the property dishonestly acquired, with the addition of twenty per cent., and must offer a trespass-offering (Lev. vi. 1–7); but if convicted without confession must restore double (Exod. xxii. 7–9).

Injury to another in a fray.—The offender must pay expenses and loss of time (Exod. xxi. 18, 19).

Causing a man's death by leaving a vicious ox at large.—The owner must lose his life or redeem it with a heavy fine (Exod. xxi. 29–31).

Causing a slave's death in the same manner.—The owner must pay thirty shekels to the slave's master and suffer the loss of his ox by stoning (Exod. xxi. 32).

Injuring a neighbour's crops by carelessness.—Full reparation must be made (Exod. xxii. 5, 6).

Lex talionis (Exod. xxi. 23–25; Lev. xxiv. 19, 20).—The law of retaliation, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," prevailed in Israel as in many ancient countries. It is clear that the injured might, and commonly did, accept money compensation in lieu of vengeance, but in the case of wilful murder it was expressly commanded that no pecuniary indemnity might be accepted (Num. xxxv. 31).

The Goël, or Avenger of Blood (Num. xxxv. 9–34; Deut. xix. 1–13).—In primitive ages, and before the full organisation of justice, a peculiar institution existed in many nations for the punishment of manslaughter. It became a point of honour with the nearest relative of the slain to avenge his kinsman's blood, and the neglect of this duty involved indelible disgrace. While this institution ensured the fulfilment of the Divine injunction, "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," it is easy to see that it involved many evils. The avenger did not consider whether

his kinsman's death was accidental or not; he judged any stratagem lawful by which he might accomplish his end, and he was liable in his headlong zeal to slay the innocent in place of the guilty. Moreover, even when successful, the relatives of the victim took up the quarrel in their turn, and thus one murder became the parent of many more. In this manner blood feuds arose between different clans, which sometimes persisted through many generations.

It is evident that the Goël, or avenger of blood, existed in Israel before the time of Moses, for he alludes to him as a character perfectly well known: what Moses did was to issue certain enactments which should render the office of Goël less fruitful of injustice and bloodshed. He appointed six of the forty-eight Levitical cities to be *Cities of Refuge*, three in the West and three in the East of Jordan. The roads leading to these cities were to be kept, it would seem, in good state of preservation (Deut. xix. 3, R.V.), and they were to afford asylum to all guilty of manslaughter, who should take sanctuary in them from the Goël. On the arrival of such a fugitive, the Levites were to inquire into the nature of his offence, and if they found him guilty of wilful murder he was at once delivered up to the avenger. If, however, the act of killing had been accidental or unintentional, the fugitive had the right of asylum in the City of Refuge, and as long as he remained within the limit of the pasture land belonging to the city—which extended on every side about 1,100 yards from the walls—he could not be touched, and at the death of the High Priest he might return to his own city in safety. In this manner Moses both punished the imprudence which had cost another man his life, and prevented carelessness or inadvertence from being treated with the severity due only to murder. These enactments evidently served their purpose, for blood feuds seem to have been unknown in ancient Israel.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

IT was by a happy inspiration that the Greek translators called the first book in the Bible *Genesis*. It is indeed a book of *beginnings*. It describes the beginning of the world, of man, of sin, of revelation, and of the nation through whom redemption should come. It is a book full of germs, and the other books of the Bible show how these germs gradually developed through leaf and flower and fruit.

Of the literary history of Genesis enough has been said in previous sections. It will be sufficient to recall the fact that while we owe the framework to the comparatively formal and prosaic pen of P, the bulk of its contents are the work of J and E, and are marked by a simplicity, beauty, and picturesqueness which have seldom, if ever, been surpassed.

How are the earlier parts of *Genesis* to be read? as history or allegory, prose or poetry? The answer is no longer doubtful. The old belief that man was literally created out of the ground about the year 4004 B.C. is to-day absolutely untenable. Cities have been disinterred which were in existence fully 6,000 years before Christ, containing written records as old as the reputed date of the Creation, and their high state of civilisation at that period proves that they had behind them an immemorial past.* Palæontologists assert, on evidence which seems irrefutable, that man has been on the earth for a period so long that a millennium may almost be taken as a unit in the numeral expressing it. It would thus appear that the early chapters of Genesis cannot be taken as literal history, and an examination of their contents shows that they were never intended so to be taken. It would be misleading to

* See *e.g. Nippur, or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates*, by J. P. PETERS, D.D. (Putnam.)

call them myths, for that word conveys an idea of falsehood, deliberate or unconscious, on the part of the originator, whereas these narratives are vehicles of truth in its most essential form. But what *were* myths and legends in the literatures of other nations were transformed by the inspired writers into religious allegories, conveying those spiritual facts which lie at the root of all religion. The stories of the Creation, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, etc., are found in Assyrian and Babylonish records, and some, if not all of them, were committed to writing at a date much earlier than the Hebrew books which have come down to us; but though in outward framework these bear considerable resemblance to the Hebrew allegories, in spiritual value they differ *toto cælo* from them. While, therefore, we are compelled to recognise the allegorical character of the earlier chapters of Genesis, and to see in them the first occurrence of an oft-recurring phenomenon—the turning of secular material to religious uses—we should be wrong to assume that we lose by acknowledging this fact. On the contrary the narratives gain infinitely both in grandeur and significance directly their nature is perceived.

That the account of the *Creation* was not meant to be taken as literal history is surely evidenced by the fact that three *days*, with their evenings and mornings, are spoken of before the creation of the sun, and yet we are distinctly told that the sun and moon were made "to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness." And once frankly accept it as allegory and how many foundation truths of religion it sets before us! That God is One; that from Him and not from a number of conflicting powers and forces all created things proceed; that design and purpose mark every creative act and stamp it as "very good"; that "the heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth hath He given to the children of men" * to govern and order it—these truths which are necessary to the very existence of any pure religion or lofty morality are here set forth in language at once terse and adequate. Undoubtedly, also, the doctrine of evolu-

* Psalm cxv. 16.

tion is in these first chapters prefigured. All attempts, indeed, to force the six creative acts as detailed in *Genesis* into exact correspondence with the order of creation as ascertained by science have failed as they deserve to fail—they were attempts to change a page of poetry into a page of a text-book of Zoology. But at least the writer depicts the creation as *gradual and orderly*, and as having its consummation in man. His account of man's place in nature corresponds with that which would be given to-day by an evolutionist who was also a Christian. On the one hand man is represented as linked on to the animal world, for his creation is part of the same series as that of fishes, birds, and animals, and the humiliation of his origin is specially insisted on in the assertion that he was "made of the dust of the ground"; on the other hand, his kinship to the spiritual world is emphatically asserted, since he is represented as created in the Divine image, and inspired by the breath of God. Grant the desirability of embodying in a single allegory the truths taught by science and by religion, respectively, regarding the creation, and we may well ask how better it could have been done than in these opening paragraphs of *Genesis*.

The account of the *Fall*, again, is purely an allegory. If it is to be taken literally we must suppose the Hebrews to have believed that serpents fed on dust (iii. 14), and they were far too familiar with the serpent tribe to have credited any such absurdity. On the face of it the story is as frankly allegorical as any fable that Æsop wrote. Interpret it rightly, and Adam is not *a* man but MAN. The record is not of what took place once, but of what is happening continuously. Temptation does indeed possess the sinister beauty and fascination of the serpent; its insinuation truly *is* that man may enjoy the pleasures of sin and yet escape its penalty: "Thou shalt not surely die." It is eternally true, again, that temptation comes through knowledge. If we apply the allegory to the race, we may say that the eating of the forbidden fruit symbolises that point in the evolution of man when conscience first made its appearance. But perhaps the symbolism is more profitable

when applied to the individual. The child, jealously shielded from all that may tempt to wrongdoing, is in much the same case as Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; but with advancing years comes the knowledge of good and evil, involving either a higher innocence or a repetition of Adam's fall. So, too, when the missionary brings to the heathen the knowledge of God their eyes are opened and they know that they are naked; and converted heathen have been known to weep for the guilt of crimes, such as infanticide, committed years before, which caused them at the time neither shame nor sorrow. Similarly every advance in religious knowledge is an advance in moral responsibility, and involves a quickened sense of sin, as St. Paul so dramatically affirms: "I was alive apart from the Law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment which was unto life this I found to be unto death" (Rom. vii. 9, 10). Thus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is always with us, and the crisis depicted in the eating of its fruit occurs once or oftener in every life. The pangs of conscience which sin awakens, the banishment from God which follows its commission, the flaming sword which forbids any easy and swift recovery of a lost state of innocence, the conviction that escape from sin can only be had through trial and suffering, and that the crushed head of the serpent must ever mean the bruised heel of humanity—these are not so much incidents in an ancient story as verities confirmed by the experience of every life. Whatever value the story of the Fall may have had when read as a literal history, its lessons become infinitely more vivid and impressive when the reader learns to read these words at its close: *de te fabula narratur.*

It is, then, in no prosaic spirit that the opening narratives of *Genesis* are to be read. We have the foreshadowing of all martyrdom in the story of Abel. Cain's doom gives us the history of conscience haunted by crime, as it repeats itself in every age; the biography of Enoch—"Enoch walked with God; and he was not for God took him"—is the biography of every saintly life. Exactly to what extent the story of the

Flood is historical cannot now be known, but none will dispute the appropriateness of this vision of judgment spanned by a rainbow placed as a warning at the dawn of history. These and other episodes in the earlier part of *Genesis* seem to enshrine not so much *particular* truths as truths *universal.*

So, too, in our estimate of the significance of names, dates, ages, etc., in this part of *Genesis*, we must not be too prosaic and literal. Take, for example, the so-called genealogical chart in Genesis x., which would seem, if taken literally, to give the names of the descendants of Noah. Professor Sayce has argued with great plausibility that this is not a genealogical chart at all, but a geographical list; it is of countries, not of individuals or clans that the historian speaks, employing a common Semitic idiom such as Ezekiel used when he said of Jerusalem that its "father was an Ammonite and its mother a Hittite"* (Ezek. xvi. 3). Whether this particular theory is ultimately accepted or not it must be in some such way that many of these records must be interpreted if they are to become intelligible. We must make much the same allowance in reading the first chapters of *Genesis* as we make for foreshortening in a picture. There is indistinctness as of things seen through a mist, an indistinctness which is not without its purpose, for the history of man from his first appearance to the time of Abraham is far too long to admit of *historical* disquisition; it could only be suggested by touches which appeal not to the reason but to the imagination.

With the story of Abraham begins, there can be little doubt, authentic history of the ordinary kind. Most readers of any literary discernment will feel that the narrative set forth from the twelfth chapter of *Genesis* onward is not romance but genuine biography, and the inscriptions of ancient Babylon already quoted (p. 18 ff.) afford external corroboration which is not the less interesting because it is indirect. In narratives of matchless literary beauty we have the lives of the great progenitors of the Hebrew nation depicted with that artlessness which is the perfection of art, each character standing out

* See SAYCE's *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 119 ff.

distinct and individual, no attempt being made by the historian either to exaggerate virtues or to disguise vices. It is the perfect *naturalness* of the lives recorded in *Genesis* which has made them so valuable as warnings and examples for all time. Thus the story marches on unbroken till at the close of the book it brings us to the threshold of Israel's *national* history, which is the theme of Exodus and, indeed, of the remainder of the Old Testament.

EXODUS

The literary history of Exodus is much the same as that of Genesis. The first seventeen chapters are historical, and the remainder mainly legislative, and while JE is predominant in the historical sections, P is responsible for the larger part of those chapters which deal with the Mosaic Law, including the elaborate instructions concerning the Tabernacle and its furniture, Aaron's robes, etc. Traces of older documents than those of J and E are also discernible, as, for example, in the Decalogue and in what has been called the "Book of the Covenant," viz. chapters xx. 20 to xxiii. 33. The Higher Critics assert that the oldest part of the history cannot have been written earlier than 900 B.C., which is some three or four centuries later than the Exodus; but even if this be so it does not affect the substantial veracity of the story. Over-colouring and exaggeration there may be, but the narrative so harmonises with what we learn from the monuments of Egypt that it is impossible to suppose that its subject-matter is merely legendary. A few examples may be useful.

We are told that in course of time a king arose in Egypt "who knew not Joseph." There can be little doubt that in the time of Joseph the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, were reigning over Egypt, and these being themselves Asiatics and of the Semitic race, would be likely to extend a friendly welcome to Jacob and his descendants. We know from an Egyptian papyrus that Bedouin tribesmen were allowed to pasture their flocks within the eastern border of Egypt at about the time of *Exodus* (reign of Meneptah II.), and it

can occasion no surprise, therefore, that under an Asiatic dynasty the Hebrews were permitted to settle in the land of Goshen. But with the rise of the eighteenth dynasty and the expulsion of the Asiatic strangers the authorities would take up a less friendly attitude to the Hebrews, and we can readily understand how the benefits conferred by their ancestor Joseph were quickly forgotten. Towards the close of this dynasty occurred that reign of Khu-n-Aten, already alluded to in a previous section (p. 24 ff.), in which Asiatic influences again became predominant, and a crusade was even waged against the ancient Egyptian faith in favour of monotheism and the worship of the sun god. With the overthrow of Khu-n-Aten and the rise of the nineteenth dynasty, there would naturally follow a very strong reaction against all things Asiatic, and the authorities would look with disfavour and even alarm upon the rapid growth of that Semitic tribe which had settled in the land of Goshen. The intervening history thus makes it easy to understand how a people who had been treated with great favour under the Shepherd Kings came to be dreaded and persecuted a few centuries later under Rameses II.

The Book of Exodus tells us that the Israelites "built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses." One of these cities, Pithom (Pi-Tum, the abode of Tum) has been discovered and excavated by Mr. Naville,* and it proves to be indeed a store city built by Rameses II., and is dedicated to Tum (the setting sun). The site of Raamses is conjectured, but it has not yet been excavated. The name, however, as found in hieroglyphic texts, and a papyrus of Rameses III., tells us that it was built by his predecessor, Rameses II. It has thus been proved beyond dispute that the same monarch built the treasure cities Pithom and Raamses as Exodus i. 11 assures us, and there can no longer be any doubt that this monarch was the Pharaoh of the Oppression.

In the account of the plagues the local colour is clearly preserved. The plagues were aimed at Egyptian superstitions;

* *The Store Cities of Pithom and the Route of the Exodus.* By EDWARD NAVILLE. Egypt Exploration Fund (1885).

for example, the sacred Nile was turned into blood, and its fish —several of which were venerated by the Egyptians—were destroyed. Frogs—whose multiplication constituted another of the plagues—were sacred to the goddess Hekt, who is represented with the head of this reptile. The sheep and oxen which were destroyed by the murrain were also sacred animals. It is noticeable, too, that several of the plagues are only miraculous intensification of evils incident to the Egyptian climate, as, for example, flies, murrain, and locusts; and Egypt is also visited sometimes by darkness, or something approaching it, this being caused by sand storms which occasionally last three days. It will be noticed that while the ten plagues bear no resemblance to the punishments inflicted by God upon the Israelites at various stages of their history, they harmonise remarkably with the surroundings amid which they are placed.

The Exodus took place almost certainly under Meneptah, the son of Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Whether the entire route of the wanderings will ever be settled is doubtful, for the further Egypt is left behind the more difficult it necessarily becomes to identify the localities. But the Egyptian inscriptions certainly lend verisimilitude to the first part of the journey. The Israelites started from Rameses (xii. 37), and the papyrus of Rameses III., in which this place is mentioned, shows that it was not far distant from the land of Goshen. Thence they went to Succoth (*v.* 37), that is in all probability Thuker or Thuket, which was the name of the district in which Pithom was situated, and was, indeed, the civil name of that city itself. The next station was "Etham, in the edge of the wilderness" (xiii. 20), *i.e.* probably Khetem (fortification), where a fortification ran along the isthmus from the north to keep out marauders from the desert. At their next encampment, which was by the sea, the locality bore an Egyptian name, Pi-hahiroth (xiv. 2), but the fugitives were now entering a region where Semitic names, such as Migdol and Baal-zephr, were to be found, which is quite in accordance with such geographical data as the con-

temporary inscriptions afford. A curious light is thrown upon the first stages of Israel's journey by a letter of the time of Seti II., the king who succeeded Meneptah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. It describes the pursuit of two runaway slaves, and they went, as did Israel, by the way of Succoth, Migdol, and Shur, showing that this was the regular route from the north-east of Egypt into Arabia. A study of these facts tends to prove that whatever the date of the history of the Exodus which has come down to us, its author possessed minute and trustworthy accounts of the facts which he narrates.

The possibility of such an event as the Exodus is illustrated in a remarkable way by an event which happened in comparatively recent times, and is recalled by Professor Sayce in his *Higher Criticism and the Monuments.* Mohammed Ali, wishing to foster the manufacture of silk in his dominions, planted the Wadi Tumilât, the Goshen of the Bible, with mulberry trees, and attracted thither a large population of Arabs and Syrians by an offer of free land and immunity from taxation and conscription. For some years the silk industry flourished, but after the death of Mohammed Ali the promised privileges were withdrawn; and the people, finding they could not induce their rulers to remedy the injustice, all moved off together on a given day with their flocks and herds, leaving their houses empty and deserted. Thus does history repeat itself after the lapse of thousands of years. It is scarcely to be supposed that a century or two hence any record of this migration will be found in Egyptian history, and probably the Exodus of the oppressed Hebrews, though a great event in the eyes of the historians of Israel, was but a trivial incident in the history of so mighty an empire as ancient Egypt, and it is quite possible that no record of it will be found on monument or papyrus. If, indeed, the Pharaoh himself had lost his life in consequence of the migration, the episode might have impressed itself more deeply upon the national memory, but the text does not compel us to assume this, and other evidence is against it. Nor is it to be supposed that the Egyptians would see Jehovah's hand in the plagues as Israel

saw it; they would be most unwilling to admit that the deity of their despised vassals could wield such marvellous power, and their misfortunes would be set down to natural causes. It is possible, too, that the story as it has come down to us is not altogether free from those exaggerations and accretions which are apt to gather round ancient national records; but in its main features we have every reason to think the history genuine and trustworthy.

The history contained in the Book of Exodus is not only valuable as showing how God gradually prepared the way for the salvation of the world, and as depicting lives which are full of warning and encouragement for all time, but more particularly it seems designed to interpret for us God's method of dealing with nations. God said of Israel: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exod. iii. 7–9). And thus we are taught that God's sympathies are ever with oppressed nationalities, and that the tyranny of the strong ever incurs the anger of the Almighty. So, again, in the vicissitudes of the wanderings and in the giving of the Law we see a nation being schooled and disciplined just as we saw God's providence educating the individual soul in the histories of Abraham and Jacob in *Genesis*. According to the author of Deuteronomy, Moses himself discerned in the desert wanderings God's schooling of the nation. "He found him in the desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him" (Deut. xxxii. 10–12). And further, in the judgments which befell Israel when they rebelled, and the blessings which were showered on them as long as they were obedient, we have an object lesson teaching that "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. xiv. 34). This

aspect of the Book *Exodus* is of special value in these days, when the social and political lessons taught by revealed religion are so much more closely studied than in past times.

There is yet another aspect in which the *Exodus* has proved of value to the Church. In every age the wanderings in the wilderness have been looked upon as a type of our earthly pilgrimage, and the religious literatures of all countries have been enriched by symbolism derived from this conception.

A considerable portion of the book is taken up with the giving of the Law; but this has been sufficiently treated in the section on the Laws of the Hexateuch.

LEVITICUS

The Book of Exodus ends with the construction of the Tabernacle, and the cloud resting upon it in token of the Divine presence; and the Book of Leviticus, which follows, naturally unfolds the ceremonial and moral law of which the Tabernacle was the centre and symbol. It differs from the other books of the Pentateuch in containing practically laws alone, for the three historical passages are exceptions rather in seeming than in reality, the investiture of Aaron and his sons with the rites that followed (chaps. viii.–x.) being designed apparently to exhibit the ceremonial law in action; and the brief episodes of Nadab and Abihu (x. 1, 2) and of Shelomith's son (xxiv. 10–14) being used merely as passing illustrations of particular enactments. Leviticus is purely a code of laws, its different sections being merely linked together by the oft-recurring formula "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying."

The book throughout belongs to the Priest's Code (P), but chapters xvii.–xxvi. are, as already explained, probably based upon a different if not an older body of legislation which has been manipulated by P or the disciple of P who gave to *Leviticus* its present form. This section is often called "The Law of Holiness," and is denoted by the letter H.

That the Book of Leviticus was probably compiled and

edited by priests, and that certainly it is written from a priestly standpoint, need not be disputed. And no intelligent theory of inspiration forbids us to believe that the writings in the book may be coloured by the prepossessions of the writer. But the argument that the elaborateness of its ceremonial must lead us to regard it as representing a late stage of the religious development of Israel is not entirely convincing. To many minds it will seem natural that the line of evolution should have been from a more to a less elaborate and artificial ritualism—of course with occasional reaction—rather than the reverse, and this certainly is confirmed by what we have recently learned from archæology. We know now that from the first the descendants of Abraham were in close touch with the ancient Assyrian civilisation, and that later "all the learning of the Egyptians" was within their reach; and both Egypt and Assyria not only had religious rituals of the most elaborate kind, but actually handed on some of their religious customs to the Hebrew nation (see p. 52 f.). As we have already seen, it has pleased God in the process of revealing true religion to avail Himself of previously existing rites and forms, purifying them and making of them aids towards a higher faith. It is therefore in entire accordance with probability that the religion of the Hebrews in the time of Moses was as elaborate and ceremonial as that described in Leviticus, and the addition of several centuries to account for its development is quite unnecessary.

The laws contained in Leviticus have been already considered. Those who would see in its ceremonials the "shadows of things to come" should read it side by side with the Epistle to the Hebrews.

NUMBERS

The name of this book is identical with that given to it in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and is derived from the two "numberings" of the people described in chapters i. and xxvi. By the Jews it is generally designated, from its opening words, "In the wilderness"—a title which very happily describes

its contents. *Leviticus* details the laws given on Mount Sinai, and the Book of *Numbers* takes up the story from this point and describes the wanderings of the Israelites from the time they left Sinai till their arrival a second time on the borders of the Promised Land in the fortieth year of their wanderings. The narrative, however, is twice interrupted by the insertion of sections of the Mosaic Legislation, and even when disentangled from these the history is somewhat partial and fragmentary. The legal sections are chapters v. and vi., xv.–xix. inclusive, and as these have already been considered they need not detain us here. We are not told when or where these laws were given, but presumably we are to suppose that the bulk of them were supplementary to the laws given on Sinai.

When the legal sections are removed the contents of the book may be divided into three parts. Part I. (chaps. i. to iv. inclusive and vii. to x. 10) describes the preparations for the onward march from Sinai, at which probably the tribes had halted for the greater part of a year. Here we have the census of the whole nation and its organisation on a war footing, tribe by tribe, with the names of its leaders and the arrangements for encamping, etc. (chaps. i., ii.). This is followed by a separate census of the Levites, with an enumeration of their various stations and duties when on the march (chaps. iii., iv.). We are then told of the final offerings presented to the completed Tabernacle by the princes of Israel (chap. vii.), of the re-enactment of the Passover, of the cloud which rested on the Tabernacle and whose rising was to be the signal of departure, and finally of the different trumpet calls by which the movements of the great host were to be directed (chaps. ix. to x. 10). Thus all arrangements were complete for the breaking up of the camp at Sinai and the onward march of the people.

Part II. describes the journey from Sinai to the southern border of Canaan at Kadesh-barnea (chaps x. 11 to xiv. 45). Having secured Hobab (Jethro), Moses's father-in-law, as a guide, the march began in a definite order which is minutely described in chapter x., and we are told of the chaunted prayer

which marked the setting forward and the pitching of the Tabernacle (*vv.* 35, 36). Chapters x. to xii. give the names of several stations on the route to southern Palestine, with the events that happened at each, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters we have the mission of the spies and the sentence of forty years' wandering which was pronounced upon the Israelites because of the murmuring and faithlessness with which the spies' report was received. The defeat brought upon them by their attempt to invade Canaan contrary to God's command (xiv. 45) was evidently of a very severe nature, and is possibly the same as that alluded to parenthetically after the death of Aaron (xxi. 1–3), and also hinted at in xxxiii. 40. It is certain that the defeat inflicted by "the Canaanite, the king of Arad" (R.V.), alluded to in xxi. 1, though inserted in a later part of the history, refers back to what had taken place many years before in the neigbourhood of Kadesh-barnea; and it seems equally certain that the vow which the defeated Israelites then took to destroy the Canaanites there (*v.* 2) was not fulfilled till some years later (Judges i. 16, 17). It is not unlikely, therefore, that the defeats inflicted by "the Canaanite, the king of Arad" mentioned in chapter xxi., and the victory achieved by the Canaanites and Amalekites mentioned in xiv. 45 are one and the same. In any case the disaster was evidently of so crushing a nature that it was many years before the Israelites could again pluck up heart to attempt the invasion of Canaan.

From this defeat we must date the thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness—years over which hangs an impenetrable veil. Even in chapter xxxiii., where a list of the chief stations at which the Israelites encamped is given, no record is preserved of this long period. We must insert the penal wanderings between the 37th and 38th verses of that chapter. It was to Kadesh that the direct journey from Sinai led the Israelites, and it was to Kadesh that they gathered for the final effort when the forty years were drawing to a close, and we can only suppose that during the thirty-eight years Kadesh had remained the headquarters of the nation (see Deut. i. 46),

and that the tribes meanwhile had spread themselves over the peninsula, seeking out the most fertile spots, and engaging in many a stubborn battle with the nomad tribes by which it was peopled. In this way the Israelites were hardened and disciplined and transformed from a nation of timorous slaves into a warlike race fitted for the task which God had assigned them.

It has often been questioned whether it was possible for so numerous a people to subsist in the "wilderness." It is quite likely that exaggerations have crept into the numerals of the Pentateuch, and if the right figures were restored the difficulty perhaps would vanish. But in any case the difficulty is largely of our own creation. We are probably in the habit of picturing the peninsula of Sinai as far more barren than it really was. There were indeed desert tracts even in those days, such as those of Paran, "the great and terrible wilderness" (Deut. i. 19), but there is evidence to show that the Sinaitic peninsula as a whole was once a well-wooded region, and as the rainfall depends largely upon the trees we may be sure that many of its districts were formerly verdant and flourishing. Its present desolate state is undoubtedly due to the frequent ravages and wanton destruction of Arab invaders. Another misunderstanding is involved in the supposition that the whole of the Israelites were always clustered together in one close mass. The various "stations" were doubtless those places in which the Tabernacle rested for any length of time, but the tribes themselves would rove considerable distances from this centre in search of pasturage, and during the thirty-eight years in which Kadesh-barnea was the headquarters they must have spread over the greater part of the peninsula. All this is involved in the very conditions of the narrative. And whatever difficulties nature and human energy could not meet were surmounted by the kindly providence of Jehovah. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the miraculous events connected with the wanderings, like those that happened in Egypt, possess true local colour. Quails are known to migrate in enormous numbers, and vast flocks of them have

been seen in the very district of which the miraculous gift of quails is narrated. A substance not unlike manna is produced by several trees of the wilderness, as, for example, the *Tamarix gallica* and the *Alhagi desertum*. Fiery or deadly serpents abound in the Arabian desert, such as the Cerastes and the Naia haje. We may therefore look upon the miracles of the wilderness as the result of natural agents miraculously employed.

Having thus glanced at the conditions which must have prevailed during that long period of thirty-eight years of which no detailed record has been preserved, we return to the narrative of Numbers. After this hiatus, Part III. (xx. to end) starts with the gathering of the warlike Israelites at Kadesh to renew their attempt to conquer Palestine. After the death of Miriam and the sentence upon Moses and Aaron that they shall die without entering the Promised Land, the people meditate an invasion from the south, but being refused a passage by Edom, they skirt the west of Idumæa, travelling southward, and then making a great loop they turn northward by the eastern edge of Moab. While travelling south, Aaron dies at Mount Hor, and when they have reached the borders of Moab on the northern route they encounter and defeat Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan (xxi. 10–35). At last the final station of the wanderings is reached "in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho." Here took place the beautiful episode of Balaam and Balak, and the book concludes with arrangements made for the division of the land which they were now about to enter, and the appointment of the Cities of Refuge.

The Book of Numbers is remarkable as containing several snatches of ancient poetry, *e.g.* the "Song of the Well" (xxi. 17, 18), an extract from the Book of the Wars of the Lord (xxi. 14, 15), an Amorite ballad commemorating the conquest of Moab by a king of the Amorites (xxi. 27–30), and the camping and departure songs of the Israelitish host already alluded to (x. 35, 36). It contains also the earliest connected passages of prophecy in the striking vaticinations of

Balaam (xxiii., xxiv.). The subjects thus suggested will be treated in later sections of this book.

Like the preceding books of the Pentateuch, Numbers is a mosaic of JE and P, the larger part, however, being due to the more prosaic writer. Some of the portions assigned to JE, and especially the chapters relating to Balak and Balaam, are of remarkable beauty.

DEUTERONOMY

The name Deuteronomy is derived from a mistranslation of Deuteronomy xvii. 18 (rendered in the Septuagint τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο), as though it meant *this repetition of the law*, instead of, as it really does mean, *a copy of this law*. The name, however, is suitable enough, for the book really is, to the modern reader, a repetition of many of the laws of the Pentateuch—a repetition instinct with a more profoundly ethical and religious spirit than any of the codes which in our version precede it. It contains a record of the events of the last month of the forty years' wandering, including the death of Moses, and thus fitly follows *Numbers*. In form it differs from the other so-called Books of Moses in being almost entirely oratorical. Omitting mention of minor features the book consists substantially of three speeches of Moses, his farewell address, the song in which he recounts God's dealing with Israel, his final blessing, and the record of his death.

The first speech, with its historical introduction, extends from chapter i. to iv. 40. It records briefly the history of Israel from the departure from Horeb until the arrival before Jericho, and concludes (iv. to *v.* 40) with an earnest and solemn appeal to the people to remember all that God has done for them, and to cleave steadfastly to His covenant.

The second speech is contained in chapters v.–xxvi., xxviii., and xxix. 1. Under the form of an address it is in reality a code of laws, having close affinities with Exodus xx.–xxiii. (*i.e.* the "Book of the Covenant" with the addition of Exodus xx. to *v.* 19), and related also, though less closely, to the "Law

of Holiness" (*i.e.* Lev. xvii.–xxvi.). These Deuteronomic laws, however, glow with a moral beauty surpassing that of any other part of the Mosaic Legislation. Compared with the enactments found in the Priest's Code the "commandments and statutes and judgements" of Deuteronomy are as living blossoms to the dried flowers of a herbarium. The code closes with a chapter of promises and threats (xxviii.), the denunciatory part of which is surely one of the most sublimely terrible things in all literature.

In the third speech (xxix. 2 to xxx. 20) Moses renews the covenant between God and His people, and after again declaring how sore a judgement shall befall the nation if they fail to observe it, promises that even after such judgements repentance will ever secure restoration. He concludes by solemnly calling heaven and earth to witness that he has duly put before them life and death, blessing and cursing, and by exhorting them to choose the better part, that it may be well with them.

The farewell address of Moses (xxxi. 1–13) consists of cheering words. Its text is, "Be strong, and of a good courage."

The Song of Moses, with the historical introduction preceding it, extends from chapter xxxi. 14 to xxxii. 47. Its theme is the goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah in His dealings with His people. The poem is original in form and sublime in spirit; tenderness and reproach alternate in its verses, and at the close it rises into a loftier strain, and speaks of a triumph which shall bring joy not to Israel alone, but to all nations (*v.* 43). The Song of Moses is one of the noblest poems in the Bible.

The remainder of the book (xxxii. 48 to end) contains the blessing which Moses uttered over each of the twelve tribes, and also an account of the circumstances of his death and burial.

As has been already pointed out (p. 35 f.), Moses could not have been the actual writer of this book as we have it, though doubtless it embodies the law which he commanded should

be written out and kept in the ark (xxxi. 25, 26). Exactly to what extent the author may have had original material on which to found the speeches we do not know, but we shall not be wrong in assuming that *Deuteronomy* truly exhibits the mind of Moses, and if this book be not "inspired," none can be said to be so.

The question of date has been already discussed. It may be well, however, to emphasise the fact that the Higher Critics have not established more than probability for the date (eighth to seventh century B.C.) upon which they have fixed for its composition. All that is certain is that in the eighteenth year of King Josiah (B.C. 621) Deuteronomy, or at least the bulk of it, was *rediscovered* (see 2 Kings xxii.). This does not enable us to do more than guess at the date at which it was *lost*, and certainly does not enable us to say when it was *written*. The Critics are agreed that it is earlier than P. Their assertion that it is later than JE is based mainly, though not exclusively, on one fact. It frequently forbids sacrifices to be offered anywhere but in the central sanctuary (xii. 5, etc.)—which the Critics assume to mean the Temple—whereas in JE (Exod. xx. 24) we read: "An altar of earth thou shalt make Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." But, after all, in this passage God's promise is not that His presence shall be with the sacrificers in *all* places, but "in all places *where I record* My name," which presumably during the wanderings and the time of the Judges would mean *wherever the Tabernacle was;* and if so, there is no disagreement between JE and D. The other proofs alleged in support of the priority of JE are admittedly not conclusive, and the whole argument of the critics amounts only to probability, not to certainty.

JOSHUA

By modern critics *Joshua* is often classed with the first five books of the Bible under the designation of the *Hexateuch.* In support of this arrangement it is pointed out that not only is it for the most part the work of the same authors as the preceding books (J, E, and P), but that with them it forms a complete account of the *Origines* of the Hebrew nation. On the other hand, it marks the opening of a new stage in the history of Israel; it is associated with a new name, and the theme is no longer the revelation of God's law. On these grounds it may be regarded as distinct from the Pentateuch, and more closely related to the purely historical books, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. This, in fact, is the classification adopted by the Jews, at least from the time of Ezra.

The story in Deuteronomy covers only a month; the narrative contained in *Joshua*, if the figures are everywhere to be accepted, extends considerably over a quarter of a century. A comparison of Joshua xiv. 10 with Deuteronomy ii. 14 would seem to show that the Conquest was completed in seven years, and as Joshua was eighty-five at this time (xiv. 10), and lived to be a hundred and ten (xxiv. 29), his death must have taken place more than thirty years after the crossing of the Jordan. It must be remembered, however, that most of this period is passed over in silence, and practically it is the seven years of conquest with which *Joshua* is concerned.

The book falls naturally into three divisions—the conquest of Canaan (i.–xii.), the division of the land among the tribes (xiii.–xxii.), and Joshua's farewell (xxiii.–xxiv.).

I. *The Conquest of Canaan* (i.–xii.).—After making his arrangements, and sending out spies to Jericho, Joshua led the people across Jordan and formed a fortified camp at Gilgal, where twelve stones taken out of the bed of Jordan were set up as a memorial. Here care was taken that all the people should be circumcised, and the Passover was duly observed, and then, encouraged by a vision of the "Captain of the

Lord's host," Joshua proceeded to invest Jericho. The fall of that town was quickly followed by the capture of Ai by stratagem after Israel had sustained a check there, owing to the sin of Achan. The ceremony of the Blessing and Cursing on Ebal and Gerizim was then duly observed according to the injunction of Deuteronomy xxvii. 11–14. The dread which now fell upon the tribes of Canaan is illustrated by the story of the Gibeonites, who, by a trick, induced Israel to enter into a league with them. This league subjected Gibeon to an attack by five kings, and Joshua, coming to the assistance of his allies, won a decisive battle at Beth-horon. A campaign was then prosecuted which reduced seven kings in succession, and brought the whole of southern Canaan into subjection (x.).

The scene then shifts to northern Palestine, where a great battle at the waters of Merom results in the overthrow of Jabin, king of Hazor, and his allies (xi. 1–15); and the section concludes with a summary of Joshua's victories, both in the north and the south.

II. *The Division of the Land among the Tribes* (xiii.–xxii). —This section has been likened to the *Domesday Book* of William the Conqueror. It gives the boundaries of the various tribes as decided by lot under the superintendence of Joshua and Eleazar (xiv. 1–5). The six Cities of Refuge are also appointed in accordance with Numbers xxxv. 9, etc., and Deuteronomy xix., and forty-eight cities are assigned to the Levites as commanded in Numbers xxxv. 1–8. Shiloh at this period was the religious centre of the nation, and there the Tabernacle was set up (xviii. 1).

III. *Joshua's Farewell* (xxiii., xxiv.).—In xxiii. is contained Joshua's first farewell speech, in which he exhorts the people, by the memory of what God has done for them, to keep themselves distinct from the native races, and not to be seduced into the worship of their gods. Otherwise, he warns them, God would not complete the subjection of the Canaanites, but they should be left as snares and traps, and scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes (*v.* 13).

In chapter xxiv. we have a later and a final speech, in which

Joshua recounts concisely the history of Israel from the days of Abraham downward, and, more solemnly than before, adjures them to cleave to the worship of the one true God. This speech was made at Shechem, whither Joshua had summoned an assembly of "the elders of Israel and their heads, their judges and their officers," and there the covenant with God was solemnly renewed, and a stone was erected as a memorial of what had there taken place (*v.* 26). The section ends with the death and burial of Joshua and of Eleazar, and the interment of Joseph's remains which had been brought up from Egypt.

That the book as we have it was not written by Joshua is apparent from the fact that he is spoken of throughout in the third person, that his life is regarded already as something belonging to the past (iv. 14), and that the book records his death and burial; but we may gather from such a passage as xxiv. 26 that Joshua, like Moses, left written documents behind him, and that the substance of them has been incorporated in the writings that have come down to us. *Joshua*, like most of the preceding books, is a composite work constructed out of JE and P; but in this instance JE appears to have been manipulated and expanded by an editor having affinities with the writer of Deuteronomy (D), and who is therefore often denoted by the symbol D^2.

Are we to regard *Joshua* as absolutely authentic history, or can we find traces in it of those exaggerations and distortions which are almost invariably to be found in the earliest parts of a nation's history? There can be no doubt that substantially the history is reliable; but in one or two respects there are characteristic errors. Thus in many parts of the book the conquest of Canaan is spoken of as being solely the work of Joshua (*e.g.* x. 40–2; xi. 23; xxi. 43–5), whereas in Judges i. the conquest is carried out in part by the several tribes, and it is especially recorded that much of southern Canaan was subdued by the tribe of Judah after the death of Joshua. The passages which speak of the Conquest as already complete in Joshua's time are the work of D^2, and there can be little

doubt that here we have a later writer by a natural exaggeration attributing to the hero who first led Israel to conquest some of the victories which were achieved in later days. The same phenomenon appears in relation to the command to extirpate the original inhabitants, and here the contradictions are contained within the limits of the Book of Joshua itself. In many passages, such as x. 40, it is represented that Joshua slew all that breathed, whereas in such passages as xvii. 13 and xxiii. 12, it is admitted that the Canaanites, though subdued, were not extirpated. That the latter is the correct view appears from later passages in Jewish history (see *ante*, p. 65). These discrepancies, however, are of a comparatively trivial nature, and serve only to display the substantial accuracy of the narrative. The history of the Conquest, it must be borne in mind, does not profess to be complete, no account being given of the subduing of central Canaan.

In studying the Book of Joshua the reader should fill in the background supplied by the recent results of Archæology. The account of Canaan brought back by the spies, as full of cities "great, and walled up to heaven" (Deut. i. 28), is, allowing for the hyperbole, in exact accordance with the impression given by the letters from Tel-el-Amarna.

The destruction of the Canaanites has often been dwelt upon as conflicting with the justice and mercy of God. It was probably, however, only a particular instance of a wide law of Providence which we see in operation to this day as often as an inferior race dwindles and dies out in presence of a superior one. It is probable that the suppression of so wicked a people was necessary to the advance of the human race, and could we see the whole of the Divine counsel perhaps we should recognise that it was best also for the Canaanites themselves. With regard to acts of cruelty recorded by the historian with no word of reprobation, such as the mutilation of Adoni-bezek (Judges i. 6), no apology is possible. Doubtless many such acts were perpetrated during the conquest, and the specimens of them which have come down to us in the inspired record serve to show how bright is

the full noontide of revelation which we enjoy compared with the twilight which just served to make the darkness visible at the dawn of Israel's history.

JUDGES

The Book of Judges is so called because it deals exclusively with that transitional time between the settlement in Canaan and the establishment of the monarchy which may roughly be described as the age of the Judges. It must be borne in mind, however, that it does not cover the whole of this period, for it tells us nothing of Eli and Samuel; and it does not consist entirely of biographies, but records also narratives and facts which throw light upon the general condition of the nation at this stage of its history.

An epitome of the story which the book has to tell cannot be better given than in its own words: "The Lord raised up judges, which saved them [the people of Israel] out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they hearkened not unto their judges, for they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from their stubborn way" (ii. 16–19).

The book consists of three parts:—

Part I. (i. to ii. 5) gives an account of the conditions prevailing immediately after the death of Joshua, when the several tribes had still a certain amount of fighting to do in order to secure themselves in their possessions. This part may be

looked upon as a kind of introduction to the rest of the book. Though it opens with the words "After the death of Joshua" it is probable that in one place at least it refers back to what took place in Joshua's lifetime, for the account of the angel's rebuke at Bochim (ii. 1–5) represents the people as still in the neighbourhood of Gilgal, where the fortified camp was constructed immediately after the crossing of the Jordan; and in the sixth verse Joshua is represented as dismissing the people, while in the eighth verse his death is recorded.

Part II. (ii. 6 to xvi.) is the section which is more strictly occupied with the accounts of the judges. Of these there are thirteen in all: the exploits of seven of them—Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, and Samson—are recorded at greater or less length, but of the remaining six—Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon—very little is known, and they have sometimes been designated "the minor judges."

Part III. (xvii.–xxi.) is of the nature of an appendix, and contains two narratives which illustrate the condition of Israel during the time of which the book treats. The first is the story of Micah and his idols (xvii., xviii.); the second that of the Levite and his concubine (xix. to end). The latter story includes the account of the war between Israel and Benjamin and the rape of the maidens of Shiloh.

As regards date and authorship it will perhaps be convenient to speak of the central part of the book (ii. 6 to xvi.) first. It is almost universally admitted that much of the material incorporated in this narrative is very ancient. It is clear, for instance, that the magnificent Song of Deborah (v.) must have been written before the tribe of Dan went north (compare *v.* 17 with chaps. xvii. and xviii.), and cannot fail to have been as old as the time of the prophetess to whom it is ascribed. In the opinion of modern critics, however, this part of the Book of Judges was edited by a writer having affinities with the author of Deuteronomy, who provided a framework for it, and impressed upon it some of his own characteristics. Whether there existed a systematic account of the Judges

before his time, or whether he was the first to bring together the various narratives is uncertain. This Deuteronomic editor apparently had no hand in parts i. and iii., and it follows that these were originally independent documents. They also are founded on ancient material, which in some cases they embody with little or no change. It is admitted, for example, by Professor Driver that chapters xvii., xviii., xix., in all probability, have "come down to us with very little, if any, alteration of form," and the bulk of part i. is almost certainly derived from a survey of Canaan made at the time of the conquest. The latest hand that can be traced in Judges is that of one living after Shiloh had ceased to be the religious centre (xviii. 31), and when kings had probably long reigned over Israel (xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25); and some exaggeration in the matter of numbers in chapter xx.,* and also to the centralisation and unity of Israel at that time (xx. 1, 8, 11, etc.), are due doubtless to his pen. But in its main features the Book of Judges may be accounted trustworthy. No doubt there are traces of a legendary element in it—in the story of Samson, for instance—but these are not of frequent occurrence, and do not seriously impair the historical value of the book.

A careful examination of the chronology of Judges seems to show—what the narrative itself might lead us to suspect—that some of the judges were merely local leaders and were contemporary with one another. On the supposition that they were consecutive, the thirteen judges cover a period of four hundred and ten years, and by adding to this the periods occupied by the Wanderings, the Conquest, the judgeship of Samuel, and the reigns of Saul and David, we find that five hundred and thirty-seven years elapsed between the Exodus and the accession of Solomon. Now, according to 1 Kings vi. 1, this period was only four hundred and eighty years, and we are thus led to the conclusion that the judges

* *E.g.* Israel is described as mustering 400,000 men, while in Deborah's time they mustered only 40,000; and in the first day's battle the Israelites slay 22,000 Benjamites without losing a man!

were not all consecutive, but that some at least were contemporary, ruling at the same time over different tribes or groups of tribes.

The Book of Judges shows us the early stages of that process by which God prepared Israel for its great mission. Incidentally it affords us moral lessons of great value; but if it is to profit us it must be read with a constant reference to the rudimentary standard of religion, which was all that Israel had at that time attained. Its heroes, often rude and barbaric in their methods, were rather patriotic warriors than moral reformers; and yet under God's providence their work in its ultimate results was more truly religious than they knew, since they helped to shape that nation, whose whole history was a preparation for the coming of Christ.

As regards literary style, much of *Judges* is extremely picturesque. The first part of the story of the Levite and his concubine, probably the only part which the editor has left entirely untouched (xix.), is perhaps as graphic and vivid as anything contained in the Old Testament. The Song of Deborah, too, it is impossible to praise too highly. "The solemn religious commencement, the picturesque description of the state of the country, the mustering of the troops from all quarters, the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes who stood aloof, the life, fire, and energy of the battle, the bitter pathos of the close—lyric poetry has nothing in any language which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production." *

RUTH

In *Judges* we have an account of pitiless wars, of base apostasies, and of ferocious acts, such as are almost invariably found in the opening chapters of national history. The picture of those times would, however, have been incomplete had not other aspects of the early days of Israel been brought before us. Accordingly, in Ruth we see the beautiful

* Dean MILMAN.

rural life which was fostered by the Mosaic Law, and we get a glimpse of mild characters and noble actions which subsisted under all the turmoil of those days of strife. We witness the touching fidelity of humble women to one another in poverty and misfortune; we hear the master greeting his servants with the pious salutation, "The Lord be with you," and we catch the cordial response of the workers, "The Lord bless thee"; we watch the fatherly interest and care exhibited by the elderly Boaz for the beautiful stranger who comes to glean on his land, and the kindly sympathy of friends and neighbours for sad Naomi on her return from a sojourn in a foreign country (ii. 14, 15; i. 19, 20).

Professor Driver says of the story, "Distance seems to have mellowed the rude unsettled age of the Judges." But is any such theory needed? How often has it happened when memoirs and diaries written in times of war and revolution have come to be published that scarce a trace of the public troubles is to be found in their pages. The storms which disturb the surface leave the depths absolutely tranquil. And so the quiet rural life with its peaceful routine of labour, its kindly customs, its unrecorded idylls and tragedies must have gone on unimpeded in many villages of Israel all through the troublous times of the pre-monarchical period. It has been said that the *dramatis personæ* of *Ruth* are too gentle and kindly for their time. But the existence of such characters is evidenced by *Judges* itself in one of its cruellest stories. In the episode of the Levite and his concubine (Judges xix.), the old man who, coming from his work in the fields, meets the wayfarer in the streets, and with a courtesy worthy of a king invites him into his house (*vv.* 16–21), is, according to his station, a personage as noble and benevolent as Boaz himself. The description of this man occurs in what is admittedly one of the oldest chapters of Judges, and there is therefore no reason to think that the story of *Ruth* owes any of its charm to the elements borrowed from a later age. We may accept it as an accurate picture of some phases of domestic life "in the days when the Judges ruled."

In addition to its value as a picture of rural life in ancient Israel, and as presenting us with several types of noble manhood and womanhood, this book makes known the fact that not only had our Lord a Gentile among His ancestors, but a Gentile of so sweet and noble a type as the modest and true-hearted Ruth. But for this story the Gentile world would have been represented in the genealogy of Christ only by Rahab the harlot.

At what date was *Ruth* composed? The Church has no theory to propound either as to date or author, and we are left to the guidance of internal evidence. We read of Ruth's son, "They called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David," and if we compare this passage with another which shows that the customs of Ruth's time were things of a comparatively distant past when the author lived (iv. 7), it becomes evident that the book was written at a time when David had become a famous historical figure in Israel's history. Nothing is therefore certain but the fact that the book was written later than the age of David. Of course there have not been wanting critics who have maintained that the book belongs to Exilic, or even post-Exilic times; but Professor Driver is probably right when he bases, both upon the spirit and style of the work, a claim that it was written far earlier, and belongs to the more classical period of Israel's history. It is possible that the genealogy at the end (iv. 18–22) was added in a later age. To be artistically perfect, the story requires to end at verse 17.

The story of Ruth is told with that perfect simplicity which is the consummate flower of art. Dean Plumptre says of it: "If it had belonged to the literature of fiction it would have taken a high place, in the vividness of its pictures and the tenderness of its pathos, as an idyllic romance." Tennyson, asked to make a poem of *Ruth*, replied, in effect, that it was a poem already which no art could improve upon; and Carlyle could find no higher praise to bestow upon *Dora* than to say, "It reminds me of the Book of Ruth."

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

The two books of Samuel were originally one, and were known by the Hebrews as "Samuel." It is clear, therefore, that we are not to understand the title "Books of Samuel" to mean books *written by* Samuel. The first suggestion by a Jew of Samuel's authorship occurs in the Babylonian Gemara, written more than fifteen centuries after the great Prophet's death, and it is, of course, quite irreconcilable with the contents of the books themselves, seeing that they carry the history of Israel far beyond the supposed author's demise (1 Sam. xxv. 1). The books, of course, derive their name from their theme, which is the career of Samuel and the results that flowed from it. It is true they embrace also the stories of Saul and David, but as both these kings were anointed by the Prophet, and ruled the kingdom according to his direction—for "Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. x. 25)—they may be looked upon as merely carrying on his work. David, indeed, is a figure which bulks as large in Israel's history as that of Samuel himself; but then his name is not peculiar to these books, it belongs also to the books of Kings and Chronicles; moreover, he was not so typical and representative of his times as was Samuel, who has been truly described as "the last of the Judges, the first of the regular succession of the Prophets, and the founder of the monarchy."

In our Authorised Version the title of this historical work is "The First and Second Books of Samuel, otherwise called The First and Second Books of Kings." In dividing the work into two books our translators followed the example first set in the Septuagint or Greek Version of the Old Testament, while the alternative title, "Books of Kings," is borrowed from the Latin Vulgate.

It is difficult to make any division of the contents of these books which shall be entirely satisfactory. Perhaps the best,

however, is that which introduces the names of the three great historical figures.

I. *The Story of Samuel* up to the time when he ceases to be Judge (1 Sam. i.–xii.).

II. *The Reign of Saul* (1 Sam. xiii. to 2 Sam. i. 27). Saul, however, is seldom the leading figure of this section. During its first few chapters Samuel continues to act as the theocratic leader, and as such to direct even the military policy of the kingdom (1 Sam. xv. 3); while the rest of the section is occupied far more with the picturesque fortunes of David—as successively shepherd boy, courtier, the friend of Jonathan, the son-in-law of the king, and outlaw—than with the history of Saul.

III. *The Reign of David,* first over Judah and then over all Israel (2 Sam. ii.–xxiv.). The last five chapters of this section are, however, of the nature of a miscellaneous appendix. They contain two poems (chapter xxii. = Ps. xviii.), together with certain episodes omitted from the previous history. This appendix is not chronological; for example, David's "last words" (xxiii. 1–7) are followed by further records of his reign.

As regards the time at which these books were written, it is admitted that a considerable part was committed to writing in David's lifetime or shortly after, and must date from *circa* 1000 B.C., and this is certainly true of 2 Sam. ix.–xx. It is clear, however, that some other parts of the books were incorporated at a much later date, for the editor finds it necessary to explain some words and customs to which he alludes, as things which in his day had ceased to be understood; as, for example, the word "seer" (1 Sam. ix. 9), and the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam. x. 12), etc. Much stress has been laid upon the fact that duplicate accounts of various incidents may be found in the books of Samuel, *e.g.* Saul's disobedience (1 Sam. xiii. and xv.), David's magnanimity in sparing Saul's life (xxiv. and xxvi.), the origin of the proverb connected with Saul's name (x. and xix.), etc. If these records be carefully examined, however, it will be found that there is no real *discrepancy*, they are

simply recurrences of somewhat similar incidents, and, as Maurice has pointed out, such recurrences may be found in every life, and the mere repetition often has the effect of making them prominent and unforgettable. There is one duplication, however, which does present difficulties. In 1 Sam. xvi. David's introduction to Saul takes place when he is a mature man, "a man of war, and clever in business," and is due to his skill in playing on the harp. Yet in the very next chapter we are told that he was but a shepherd lad when he first came under Saul's notice, and that the introduction was consequent on the youth's determination to fight Goliath. Both accounts are probably true substantially, and a slight change of the text would reconcile them; but the existing contradiction certainly proves that there were two accounts, and that at the time they were combined their relation to one another was not fully understood. On the whole it becomes clear that the latest manipulation of these books took place long after David's death. In 1 Sam. xxvii. 6 we read, "Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day," and these words, at least, must have been written some considerable time after the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But while there are passages in *Samuel* which possibly were not incorporated in it till the seventh or eighth century B.C., this does not affect adversely the character of the book beyond giving rise, perhaps, to some slight inaccuracies. A great part of the work is admitted to be contemporary with the events it records, and the whole of it may confidently be regarded as substantially authentic.*

In religious value *Samuel* is second to none of the historical

* It has been objected that Hannah's Song (1 Sam. ii.) is not altogether suitable to her circumstances, and would be more appropriate as an ode written after some martial victory. To this it may be rejoined that verses 5, 6, and 7 would be out of place in such an ode, and are quite in accord with such a song of thanksgiving as Hannah may have been supposed to have indited. It is quite true that verse 10 must have been written after the establishment of the monarchy; but such a psalm as this would be certain in time to be used liturgically, when naturally some such verse might be appended to fit it for national use.

books of the Old Testament. Even its subordinate biographies —such as the pathetic stories of Eli, Saul, and Jonathan—are full of the deepest spiritual instruction, and the lives of Samuel and David are, it is needless to point out, of the first importance. Samuel differs widely from the preceding judges, who were rather national heroes than religious reformers. His innocent childhood, the statesmanlike qualities which for the first time closely welded all the tribes together, and so prepared the way for the monarchy, the almost terrible earnestness of his zeal for righteousness, the magnanimity which enabled him to accede to the nation's request when they clamoured for a king, laying down his office with a pathetic dignity which is more than regal; the strong affection for the unhappy Saul which he manifested, even while, in his character as prophet, announcing his doom—these traits unite to form a character which is worthy to rank in greatness with that of Abraham and Moses. As for David there is perhaps no character in the whole range of biography which so reflects every phase of human experience, or appeals so powerfully to the universal heart of man. If the life of the great ancestor of the Messiah were cut out, the gap would be almost as great in the religious history of mankind as in the annals of Israel. And while the material of the book is thus of the utmost value, the literary treatment is worthy of the subject: "the style is singularly bright, flowing, and picturesque," says Driver; and another critic pronounces the book "one of the best specimens of Hebrew prose in the golden age of Hebrew literature."*

THE BOOKS OF KINGS

The two books of Kings were originally one. In the translations, however, they were divided and numbered with the Books of Samuel, being known in the Greek Septuagint as "the third and fourth books of the kingdoms," and in the Latin Vulgate as "the third and fourth books of the Kings."

* Hon. Ed. T. B. Twisleton.

It is a comparatively easy task to trace the elements of which these books are composed.

The *framework* is due, if not to Jeremiah, to some contemporary, who, like that prophet, was imbued with the Deuteronomic spirit. To him is due the formulæ by which the reign of each king is announced and summarised, which state, for example, the year of his accession, the length of his reign, the name of his mother (in the case of the kings of Judah), his character, etc. Undoubtedly he has also in some sections recast his material in his own words, and perhaps coloured it with his own ideas. This appears to be the case notably in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.

The *political* parts of the books, containing records, usually brief, of the reigns of the various kings, are taken from three authorities which the compiler names: the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Kings xi. 41); the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel"; and the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah"; the two last authorities being frequently referred to. What was the origin of these books? We gather from several passages in the historical books (*e.g.* 2 Sam. viii. 16; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18, etc.) that there was an officer at the courts of Israel and Judah named the Recorder, whose duty it was doubtless to keep a written account of the chief events of the various reigns. We may fairly suppose, therefore, either that the books referred to by the compiler of *Kings* were written by these Recorders, or were based upon their annals. In either case we have the most satisfactory guarantee of the reliability of the history which *Kings* contains.

The *prophetical* part, which occupies about a third of the entire work, and deals with events connected with Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Micaiah the son of Imlah, and other prophets, is in a different style from the rest, more vivid and picturesque, and was probably derived from writings of the prophets themselves. The compiler of the Books of Chronicles alludes to the "Words" or "Acts" of various prophets, *e.g.* Nathan and

Gad (I. xxix. 29), Iddo (II. ix. 29), Shemaiah (II. xii. 15), etc.; and though there is reason to suppose that he did not quote from the original books that he names, or, if so, that he recast their narratives in his own style, yet his allusions are evidence that such writings had existed, and it is probably from such "Words" or "Acts" as these that the prophetical sections of *Kings* were taken.

The particulars about the *Temple* may have been derived from the Temple archives, but this, of course, is only conjecture.

The work covers the history of the Chosen People from the nomination of Solomon as David's successor to the release of Jehoiachin from his Babylonish prison in 562 B.C., a period of over four hundred years. It is usual to divide its contents into three parts.

I. The history of Solomon (1 Kings i.–xi.).

II. The history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah until Israel's captivity (1 Kings xii.; 2 Kings xvii.). In detailing these the compiler takes up the story of the monarch of one kingdom and follows it to its close. He then gives the history of the contemporary monarch of the other kingdom, and when he has concluded it reverts to the first history again. The story of the two kingdoms is thus given almost simultaneously in parallel pictures.

III. The history of Judah from the time of the downfall of Israel to the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xviii.–xxv.).

The Books of Kings not only continue the history of God's providential preparation for the coming of the Messiah; they are also full of the most valuable "instruction in righteousness," both for nations and individuals. The religious lessons which they teach are best brought out in Maurice's *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, a work which should be carefully studied by all who wish to derive spiritual benefit from the historical books of the Old Testament.

The substantial accuracy of the Books of Kings stands in no need of vindication; it is agreed on all hands that the

internal evidence alone is sufficient to establish it. But it is interesting to find that the evidence of the monuments affords external confirmation which is becoming yearly stronger. Not only have the names of foreign monarchs with whom Israel's history is concerned been deciphered on the ancient monuments—as, *e.g.*, the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Shalmaneser, etc.; Mesha, king of Moab; Hazael, king of Syria; and various kings of Egypt, *e.g.* Shishak, Pharaoh Necho, and Pharaoh Hophra—but, what was antecedently less likely, the names of several of the kings of Israel and Judah (Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, Ahaz, etc.) have also been discovered in the inscriptions of the surrounding nations. Even comparatively trivial statements have been corroborated in a wonderful manner. For example, in 2 Kings xx. 20 we read of Hezekiah that "he made a pool and a conduit, and brought water into the city." As is well known, the conduit which brings water to the Pool of Siloam has yielded an inscription which is contemporary with its completion, and from the form of the letters there can be little doubt that it belongs to a date at least as early as Hezekiah.* It is not contended, of course, that the Books of Kings are absolutely free from errors; if so they would be unlike any other ancient books of the kind. There are certainly chronological discrepancies, due partially, perhaps, to the defective manner of dating by the length of the kings' reigns, in which a part of a year was necessarily reckoned as a whole year. But these errors do not affect the religious value of the books, and to point them out would be of little interest to the general reader.

It is conceded that the work now known as the First and Second Book of Kings was completed practically as we have it before the Exile, though one or two passages (*e.g.* 2 Kings xxiv. 18 ff.) were introduced after the Exile had commenced.

* See SAYCE's *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 376 ff.

CHRONICLES

In the Hebrew canon *Chronicles* is not divided into two books, as in the various versions or translations. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* formed originally one work, compiled by a single author, who is generally known as the "Chronicler." If so, this work covered the history of Judah from the death of Saul to the second visit of Nehemiah to the restored Jews in B.C. 432. Following the English Version, however, *Chronicles* must here be treated as a book by itself.

Chronicles is history, but history written to serve a purpose; neither in accuracy nor in impartiality can it be said to rank with *Kings*. The Chronicler wrote for the returned exiles, his purpose being to weld them once more into a nation, to re-awaken in them an interest in their past, and to kindle zeal for Jehovah's service, especially as embodied in the Temple worship. With this object he recast much of the material contained in *Kings*, leaving out the history of the northern kingdom except at points where it touched that of Judah, and bringing out strongly the part which the Temple and its service had played in the story of the nation. For the encouragement of the people he lays stress upon the glory which had been attained at times under the monarchy, and points out how invariably prosperity had rewarded the monarchs who clave steadfastly to the worship of Jehovah, and disaster had overtaken those who had forsaken it. The author was probably a Levite; his history all centres round Jerusalem and the Temple, and is written from an ecclesiastical standpoint.

As to the sources of this compilation, the Chronicler had doubtless the same authorities for his work as the author of *Kings*, and may have made use of material contained in them which the latter author had neglected. He refers also, as we have seen, to the "Words" or "Acts" of several seers and prophets, but as the language is always post-Exilic and similar to his own, either these books were the works of men

who lived much later than the prophets in question, or the Chronicler quoted them loosely and in his own language. It is scarcely disputed, however, that *Chronicles* contains historical matter not included in *Kings*, however this may have been obtained.

The work is perhaps best divided into three main parts.

Section I. (1 Chron. i.–ix.) consists almost exclusively of genealogical lists of the various tribes. In accordance with the plan followed throughout most space is devoted to Judah, Benjamin, and the priestly tribe of Levi. Zebulun and Dan are not noticed at all, and the account of the other tribes is brief. The most interesting of these lists is that of the descendants of David in chapter iii. Interspersed parenthetically in this section are several short narratives: the story of Jabez (iv. 9, 10) and the accounts of certain contests in which various tribes were engaged, *e.g.* Simeon (iv. 39–43), Reuben (v. 10, 18–22), Ephraim (vii. 21), and Benjamin (viii. 13). This section closes with a list of the families who returned to the Holy Land after the Captivity.

Section II. (1 Chron. x. to 2 Chron. ix.) contains at length the reigns of David and Solomon. This is largely taken up in extolling their power and magnificence, and their connection with the building of the Temple, and the organisation of its ritual and worship.

Section III. (2 Chron. x.–xxxvi.) contains the history of the kingdom of Judah from the time of Rehoboam. The writer does not complicate the story, as does the author of *Kings*, with the annals of Israel; and he dwells especially upon the reigns of four good kings—Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. In these chapters he is careful to enforce the *moral* of each reign, and he seeks to promote patriotism and religion among his people by dwelling much upon military matters and the details of religious ceremonial.

It has been already hinted that the Chronicler cannot be looked upon as so accurate an historian as the compiler of *Kings*. Indeed, Professor Sayce goes so far as to say, "We must ever bear in mind that in the Book of Chronicles we

have to look for Hagadah"—*i.e.* legendary stories which illustrate religious truths—"rather than for history in the modern sense of the word." It is clear that there is a tendency to exaggerate numbers in his work; for instance, where he speaks of Asa's army drawn from two tribes—Benjamin and Judah—as amounting to 580,000 men, and Zerak, the Ethiopian, attacking these with an army of a million! (2 Chron. xiv. 8, 9). It would seem also that the Chronicler coloured his whole history with the ritual conceptions of his own time, this colouring being found even in the speeches which he puts into the mouths of his characters, the language in these speeches being certainly his own. On the whole we must conclude with Professor Sayce, that "although we may accept the otherwise unsupported narratives of the Chronicler in their general outlines, the details they contain must be submitted to criticism."

At what date did the Chronicler live? Even if we consult *Chronicles* alone we should conclude that he lived at least six generations after Zerubbabel (1 Chron. iii. 17–24), which would make the earlier date permissible, *circâ* 350 B.C. As we have seen, however, Chronicles is probably part of a large work including Ezra and Nehemiah, and in these latter books will be found indications which compel us to adopt a date *at least* twenty years later.

EZRA

In the Hebrew canon Ezra and Nehemiah form a single book under the title of *Ezra*. As already said, in all probability these formed with *Chronicles* one continuous work, the whole being the compilation of the "Chronicler."

As a basis for such comment as may be necessary, it may be well to give a brief summary of the historical ground which the book directly or indirectly covers. In 588 B.C. took place the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were carried away captives to Babylon. Some fifty years later Cyrus, originally king of Elam, afterwards king of Persia,

crowned his career of conquest by the capture of Babylon, and in 537 B.C., the second year of his reign in Babylon, he issued an edict allowing the Jews to return to their own land. The migration took place under Zerubbabel, that leader being accompanied by 42,360 Jews, but whether this number accounts only for the heads of families or includes the women and children is uncertain. In their attempts to rebuild the Temple the restored Jews were much hampered by the opposition of the mixed population who had inhabited the country since the deportation of the rightful inhabitants, and it was not till more than twenty years after the decree of Cyrus, viz. in B.C. 516, when Darius was king, that the Temple was completed. Some sixty years later, B.C. 458, Ezra, a Jewish priest who had evidently risen to a position of eminence in Babylon under Artaxerxes I. (Longimanus), was sent to Jerusalem by the Great King with a present of silver and gold to be expended in sacrifices. The royal letter, or edict, with which Ezra the scribe was armed, enabled him to draw upon the treasurers "beyond the river," within certain limits, for the service of the House of God; it also authorised him to appoint magistrates and judges, gave permission for such of the Jews as were so minded to accompany him, and exempted the priests, Levites, and inferior ministers of the Temple from taxation. Ezra, then, with a large body of returning exiles, set out for Jerusalem, and on his arrival initiated a reformation of religion among his people, especially in persuading them to put away the foreign wives whom they had married.

In dealing with this period the compiler, whoever he was, had not to trust to tradition, he had reliable written material. His book includes certain contemporary documents written in Aramaic (viz. iv. 8 to vi. 18, and also vii. 12–26), which are incorporated unaltered with the Hebrew, and he had also the original memoirs of Ezra, in which the learned scribe speaks in the first person (vii. 27 to ix. 15), though apparently only a part of these were made use of unchanged, other parts (*e.g.* chap. x.) being slightly altered by the compiler. There can be little doubt that the register of names in chapter ii.

was also derived from an original document drawn up at the time of the Restoration by Zerubbabel.

There is thus every reason to believe in the substantial accuracy of *Ezra* as history. There is, indeed, in one chapter a confusion of periods, which doubtless arose from the fact that the compiler lived at a time much later than that of which he treats. In chapter iv. the verses 1–5, and also verse 24, treat of the difficulties which the Jews encountered from their adversaries in building the *Temple;* but in verses 6–23 we have a document which relates to a similar opposition which occurred during the building of the *city walls.* Now the Temple was completed B.C. 516, whereas the walls were rebuilt in 445 under Nehemiah (Neh. ii. 12 ff.). That it is indeed this latter event to which verses 6–23 refer is rendered certain from the fact that they allude to Ahasuerus (*i.e.* Xerxes I.) and Artaxerxes (*i.e.* Artaxerxes I., Longimanus), the first of whom succeeded to the throne thirty-one and the latter fifty-one years after the completion of the Temple at Jerusalem. It is clear, therefore, that here we have a document which rightly belongs to the time of Nehemiah wrongly placed in the time of Zerubbabel, the two periods being separated by a space of more than seventy years. The reader must bear this in mind if he would read *Ezra* intelligently.

It will be gathered from what has been stated that the compiler of Ezra must have lived long after the time of the "ready scribe"; other indications confirm this conclusion. For example, an interval of about sixty years intervenes between the close of chapter vi. and the opening of chapter vii., and as this interval immediately precedes Ezra's appearance at Jerusalem, he could not have been ignorant of the events that happened in it; yet this period is passed over with the words, "after these things," which give the reader no inkling that two generations have passed away since the close of the previous verse. No contemporary of Ezra could have written thus, but it was quite natural for an historian to do so who lived so long after the events as to occasion considerable foreshortening in the retrospect. Again, a contemporary of Ezra would never

have used the phrase "king of Persia"; he would have used some such expression, "the king," or the "king of kings," as Ezra himself does in the portion of his memoirs that are incorporated in this book (vii. 27 to ix. 15), and as is done in the contemporary inscriptions. The title used by the compiler is an indication that he did not write during the Persian supremacy. Further proofs of a late date will be found in *Nehemiah*, which is by the same hand.

NEHEMIAH

Ezra closes with the mission of the great reformer who gives his name to that book, *circa* B.C. 458. *Nehemiah* resumes the history in B.C. 444. It seems clear that in the interval Ezra's work had been to some extent undone, and that the enemies of the Jews had succeeded in checking their attempts to reorganise the nation. Probably to this period belongs the misplaced section of *Ezra*, viz. iv. 6–23, which contains the correspondence between Rehum the chancellor, etc., and King Artaxerxes, which resulted in the Jews being forbidden to proceed with the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The present book relates how, through the intercession of another influential Jew in Babylon, Nehemiah, the favour of Artaxerxes was won, the plots of the Jews' enemies foiled, and a further religious reformation brought about. The book falls into three sections.

I. *Material and Moral Reconstruction* (i.–vii.).—Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer, induces Artaxerxes to send him to Jerusalem for a set time to rebuild the walls of the city. He defeats the efforts of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gashmu to interfere with the progress of the work, puts an end to the oppression of the poor Jews by their richer brethren, and takes measures to augment the population of Jerusalem. In this section is incorporated a register of the exiles who returned with Zerubbabel B.C. 537.

II. *The Ezra Episode* (viii.–x.). — The people, "gathered together as one man in the broad space that was before the

water gate," are much moved by the Law which is read to them during two days by Ezra. Hearing of the institution of the Feast of Tabernacles, they at once solemnly observe it; and two days after the feast they again assemble, publicly confess their sins, and renew their covenant with God, which is sealed by Nehemiah and other representatives of the nation.

III. *Mainly Statistical* (xi.–xiii.).—This section is characterised by the lists of names it contains, *e.g.* names of those chosen by lot to augment the population of Jerusalem, list of villages and towns occupied by returned exiles, the names of the high priests from Jeshua to Jaddua, etc. Of more general interest is Nehemiah's account of the dedication of the completed walls (xii. 27–43), and of his second visit to Jerusalem (B.C. 432), and the reforms which he then instituted.

There can be little doubt that the movement identified with Ezra and Nehemiah was in some respects analogous to the Oxford Movement in our own time, having the same excellencies and the same limitations. It sought to rekindle reverence for antiquity, love for God's House, and such a zeal and devotion as should result in beautified religious services. It is interesting to find that the reform was accompanied by the same ardour on behalf of the poor and oppressed as has characterised the similar movements in our own time. Perhaps the most valuable section of Nehemiah to modern readers is the fifth chapter, which tells of the hot indignation of the prophet when he heard from the poorer Jews how, through the covetousness of their richer brethren, they were overworked, underpaid, and reduced to poverty and bondage. For a time at least the prophet induced the nobles and the rulers to give up usury, to cancel debts, and to restore the lands and houses which, contrary to the Law of Moses, they had permanently alienated from their debtors. No doubt it was by his own generous conduct that Nehemiah shamed his fellow-countrymen into this reform, for, seeing so much poverty around him, he refused to take any pay as governor, worked on the wall with his servants at his own charges, and dispensed boundless hospitality both to Jews and Gentiles.

On the social side of religion he lived up to a higher standard of life than has yet been accepted by Christians, and he could use, without Pharisaism, the prayer with which the fifth chapter concludes: "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people."

Nehemiah is founded on contemporary documents. A great part of it is in the prophet's own words, *e.g.* chapters i.–vii.; xii. 27–43; and xiii.

The late date of the compiler's work is very clearly indicated in *Nehemiah.* For example, the chief Levitical families of the time of Johanan (383–51) are given (xii. 22–6), and the list of high priests is brought down to Jaddua in 331 B.C. (xii. 10, 11). If these lists stood alone it might plausibly have been maintained that they were added in later times, but taken in conjunction with the facts adduced under *Ezra*, it becomes clear that the compiler lived later than 331 B.C.

That this compiler was the Chronicler, and that *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* were originally one work is almost certain. The same characteristics mark the compiler's work in all three books, the same fondness for lists and genealogies, and the same *motif*, for throughout Jerusalem, the Temple, the services form a centre around which the whole narrative is grouped.

ESTHER

It will not do to form any *a priori* conception of the character of the books included in the canon of Scripture. A reverent and candid examination shows that it has pleased God to make use of almost every known kind of literature to reveal His will and fulfil His purposes; and if we bear this in mind the result of an examination of *Esther* will occasion no shock to faith. This book carries us back to the Persian Empire, and shows us to what dangers the exiles were exposed while their restored brethren in Palestine were reorganising the Jewish State. It gives us a needful glimpse of the backwater of Jewish history, showing that God's providential care

for His ancient people did not content itself with conducting the main stream of national life. It proved most effectual in intensifying Jewish patriotism and promoting national unity, and thus powerfully co-operated in preparing the way for the Messiah. But nevertheless it is not history in the sense in which *Kings*, for example, is history. A brief examination will serve to show this.

The story says that King Ahasuerus, that is Xerxes (485–65), divorced the Queen Vashti because she refused to show herself unveiled to the people, and that he raised a Jewess named Esther as queen in her place. Esther, according to the story, was not simply a woman of the harem, she was *queen* (ii. 17, etc.), and was chosen as such out of many virgins selected from all the provinces for their beauty. In point of fact, however, the Persian monarchs could only select their queens from one of seven noble Persian families, and during the years to which *Esther* refers—the seventh to the twelfth years of Xerxes*—the queen was a certain Amnestris, a cruel woman who bears no resemblance to Esther. This by itself forms an insuperable obstacle to accepting the book as strictly historical. And the work presents several other difficulties, which, while certainly admitting of explanation when taken singly, are undoubtedly weighty in their cumulative effect. If Vashti had shown herself unveiled to the people she would, according to Persian ideas, have been guilty of a glaring impropriety: it is possible that Xerxes, if intoxicated, might have commanded her to act thus, but it is not easy to suppose that when sober he would have divorced her for her non-compliance. Then again there seems much that is exaggerated or improbable in the details of the story—the enormous bribe offered by Haman to Xerxes for the decree ordering the assassination of the Jews, 10,000 talents of silver, or £3,000,000 (iii. 9); the twelve whole months during which Haman cast lots to choose a suitable day for his design (iii. 7); the long public notice given of the impending massacre, viz. eleven months (iii. 12, 13); the height of the stake, seventy-five feet (v. 14),

* Compare ii. 16 and iii. 7.

upon which Mordecai was to be impaled; the surprise of Xerxes when Esther reminds him of the decree which he himself had promulgated (vii. 5–7); the great number of the Jews' adversaries—75,000—who were slain in the provinces in one day (ix. 16). Such improbabilities have led even so redoubtable an opponent of the Higher Critics as Professor Sayce to write: "Only one conclusion seems possible: the story of Esther is an example of Jewish Hagadah, which has been founded upon one of those semi-historical tales of which the Persian chronicles seem to be full."

While, however, errors and exaggerations must be admitted, there is reason to believe that the book rests upon a substantial basis of history. The local colouring is so strikingly correct as to render it probable that the author himself lived at Susa or Babylon; and if so, some of the material with which tradition supplied him must have been authentic. Esther could not have been queen, but she may have been the king's favourite in the harem with more than queenly influence, and that her uncle may have occupied high office at the same time is far from being improbable, seeing how frequently Jews have attained to supreme positions in Gentile courts. If this be granted, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that the favourite and the minister between them may have warded off some threatened catastrophe from the Jews. So as regards the other statements in the book. With the story of the massacre of the Armenians in Asia and at Constantinople fresh in our minds,* the account of the deliberate planning of the extermination of an obnoxious race by an oriental despot must seem less improbable than it would have done a few years ago, especially when it is allowed that Xerxes possessed "a weak, capricious, proud, and madlike disposition," and "cannot be judged by the standard of ordinary humanity."† If, indeed, the counter decree which enabled the Jews to destroy 75,000—or as the Septuagint has it, 15,000—of their enemies had been aimed at the king's own country-

* A.D. 1898.

† Prof. S. DAVIDSON'S *Introduction to the Old Testament.*

men, the Persians, the narrative would certainly have been incredible; but the story indicates rather that the Persian army sided with the Jews, and that the men who were slain belonged to subject races like the Jews themselves. It seems certain that the Feast of Purim, which commemorated the event narrated in *Esther*, originated under the Persian Empire, and once established it would be as impossible to alter its signification as, say, that of Guy Fawkes Day in our own land. There can consequently be very little doubt that some such event happened as that recorded in *Esther*, although the story has come down to us in a distorted shape. We may suppose either that the author intended to write a history and was misled by his authorities, or that he deliberately used his material as a subject for a historical romance, keeping near to the main facts, much as Bulwer Lytton and Tennyson have done in their treatment of King Harold. From the dramatic way in which the story is told, and its artistic structure, the latter would seem the more probable supposition.

What is the earliest date at which Esther can have been written? It is evident that we must allow a considerable interval to account for the obscuring of salient facts of the time of Xerxes, such as the substitution of Esther for Amnestris. The author, it is true, refers from time to time to the "chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia" (x. 2, etc.), but these "chronicles" must themselves have been unreliable, for the Greek historian Ktesis also professed to consult the archives of the Persian kingdom, and his accounts of Persian history are admittedly little else than historical romances. The Persian Empire came to an end B.C. 332, about a hundred and thirty years after the death of Xerxes, and this would seem to be approximately the earliest date at which *Esther* could have been written.

Esther's claim to a place in the canon of Scripture has been frequently challenged. It was rejected by Melito of Sardis, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, and others, and Luther "wished that it did not exist." In modern times, too, it has often been objected to as being destitute of religious teaching.

"No mention is made of the Temple, or of Jerusalem, or of the Holy Land, or of the priests or Levites, or of any festival except that of Purim . . . or of the Law, or of any prophet, or of the Sabbath Day, or even of Prayer." Even the name of God is not once mentioned. But we are surely beginning now to understand that religion is not concerned merely with those subjects which we are apt exclusively to term "religious," but that it embraces secular also. As the *Song of Songs* shows that love between man and woman, which occupies so important a place both in literature and human life, is not outside the domain of religion, so *Esther* seems to stamp another of the most powerful of human influences, patriotism, as divine. The patriotism of the Jews has played a most useful part in preserving for humanity its religious heritage, and it is not unmeet that one book in the canon should be concerned solely with this theme. It was its patriotic spirit which endeared it to the Jews, who held it to be more precious than any other part of Scripture, the Pentateuch alone excepted. We, of necessity, form a very different estimate of it: judging the various books entirely by their moral and spiritual usefulness to ourselves, we put this last in our list, as marking the point where the inspired merges into the uninspired. But when we are disposed to contemn *Esther* as being the mere husk of Judaism, we shall do well to remind ourselves of the precious kernel which it has done something to preserve.

ON THE NATURE OF HEBREW POETRY

THE greater part of the Old Testament may be described as poetry, but poetry of so simple a structure that its form offers no obstacle to its translation into other languages. "Let a translator only be literal, and, so far as the nature of his language permit, let him preserve the original order of the words, and he will infallibly put the reader in possession of all or nearly all that the Hebrew text can give to the best Hebrew scholar of the day."* This follows from the unartificial nature of Hebrew verses. They possess neither rhyme nor metre; but in place of these they display a characteristic which has been variously denoted as *sense-rhythm* or *parallelism*—a characteristic which lends itself as readily to a foreign language as to its native Hebrew. It has thus been providentially ordered that the Divine revelation given originally in Hebrew may be handed on unimpaired to men of every race and tongue.

Of the two terms *sense-rhythm* or *parallelism* the former is probably the more accurate and descriptive, but as the latter lends itself better to the classification of the varieties of Hebrew poetry, it will be retained in this essay. It was the term used by Bishop Lowth (1710–87), who was the first to demonstrate clearly the structure of Hebrew verse. His work, *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*, published originally in Latin in 1753, is marked by the faults of its time, so far as poetic taste and discrimination are concerned; but its clear analysis of the poetic elements of the Old Testament will render its publication ever memorable.

* JEBB, *Sacr. Lit.*

Parallelism may best be defined in Bishop Lowth's own words: "The correspondence of one verse or line with another I call *parallelism.* When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in the form of construction, these I call *parallel lines;* and the words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines I call *parallel terms*" (*Prel. Disc. to Isaiah*). To this may be added Professor S. Davidson's briefer description: "Thought corresponds to thought in repetition, amplification, contrast, or response" (*Introd. to Psalms*).

The various kinds of parallelism described by Bishop Lowth are as follows:—

I. **Synonymous Parallelism.**—This is when the second verse or line is synonymous in sense with the first; "when the same sentiment is repeated in different but equivalent terms." Examples are frequent in almost every poem in the Old Testament. Two will suffice here:—

> "He turned the hard rock into a standing water,
> The flint-stone into a springing well."—*Ps.* cxiv. 8.
>
> "We grope for the wall like the blind,
> Yea, we grope as they that have no eyes."—*Isa.* lix. 10.

In the great majority of cases, however, it is scarcely correct to describe the lines as containing "equivalent" terms. Almost always the second line adds a shade to the sentiment or statement previously expressed, and often there is a distinct addition to the sense; it is, indeed, the added emphasis which constitutes the charm, for a mere repetition in different terms would be monotonous. A good example of what may rather be termed progressive than synonymous parallelism occurs in the description of leviathan—

> "The flakes of his flesh are joined together:
> They are firm upon him; they cannot be moved.
> His heart is as firm as a stone;
> Yea, firm as the nether millstone.
> When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid:
> By reason of consternation they are beside themselves."
>
> *Job* xli. 23–5.

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II. Antithetic or Contrasted Parallelism—where a thing is illustrated by its contrary being opposed to it, sentiments to sentiments, or words to words, *e.g.*—

"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb:
But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."—*Prov.* xxvii. 7.

"The bows of the mighty men are broken,
And they that stumbled are girded with strength."—1 *Sam.* ii. 4.

III. Constructive or Synthetic Parallelism—where a parallelism is maintained, not by the iteration, with or without addition, of the same image or sentiment, and not by the opposition of their contraries, but merely by *the form* in which the sentence is constructed, *e.g.*—

"The clouds poured out water:
The skies sent out a sound:
Thine arrows also went abroad."—*Ps.* lxxvii. 17.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever:
The judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether."
Ps. xix. 7–9.

"Though they dig into hell, thence shall My hand take them:
And though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.
And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence:
And though they be hid from My sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them."
Amos ix. 2,3.

The above three classes are certainly not exhaustive, they do not cover the whole ground of Old Testament poetry, yet if we carry the analysis further the parallelism becomes so faint as to elude definition. It would seem, therefore, that a term is needed which shall embrace all that is not included under the word parallelism, and the term that suggests itself is *cadence*. If Psalm cxix., for example, be examined, much of it will be found to display a sense-modulation which certainly is not parallelism, and which perhaps is best described by the word I have suggested. If we say that the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, so far as its outward

form is concerned, are parallelism and cadence, the definition will cover, approximately, the entire subject under discussion.

The way in which the parallelisms are disposed in Hebrew poetry is closely analogous to the arrangements of rhyme in English. The commonest arrangement of parallelisms in Hebrew, as of rhymes in English, is that of couplets.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold."—*Prov.* iii. 13–14.

Occasionally we meet with triplets, like the triplets of rhyme in Tennyson's "Two Voices."

"Lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth."
Song of Songs ii. 11, 12.

"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee;
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah."
Micah ii. 12.

A quartet of parallel lines is somewhat rare, as, indeed, is a quartet of rhymes in English.

"He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man;
He that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck;
He that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine's blood;
He that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol."
Isa. lxvi. 3.

"Hath the rain a father?
Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?
Out of whose womb came the ice?
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"
Job xxxviii. 28, 29.

Not infrequently the parallelisms are alternate, the first and third being parallel and the second and fourth.

"The Lord looketh down from heaven;
He beholdeth all the sons of men;
From the place of His habitation He looketh forth
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 13, 14.

"Thy Maker is thine husband;
The Lord of Hosts is His name;
And the Holy One of Israel is thy redeemer;
The God of the whole earth shall He be called."
Isa. liv. 5.

There are yet other cases in which parallel lines are separated by two or more other parallelisms—

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
And gross darkness the people:
But the Lord shall arise upon thee,
And His glory shall be seen upon thee."—*Isa.* lx. 1, 2.

When this kind of arrangement is complete in four lines, it corresponds to the disposition of the rhymes in the metre of *In Memoriam; e.g.*—

"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his fire shall not shine.
And the light shall be dark in his tent,
And the lamp above him shall be put out.
The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
And his own counsel shall cast him down.
For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walketh upon a snare."—*Job* xviii. 5–8.

Of course, in no poem is one of these arrangements adhered to throughout. The different kinds of parallelism, and the different arrangements of them, are used as the thought demands; or the parallelism disappears for a time and cadence takes its place. It is, in fact, this freedom and variety which gives its charm to Hebrew poetry and renders it so flexible an instrument of expression.

Alphabetical Poems.—There are thirteen poems in the Old Testament the initial letters of whose lines or verses follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet; these are known as Acrostic or Alphabetical Poems. It may readily be surmised that this device, while it may have assisted the memory, does not add to the literary value of the poems. It naturally acted as a fetter upon the imagination, and it had none of the advantages which accompany the restraints of modern verse, neither

adding beauty, as do rhyme and metre, nor aiding compression of thought, as does the sonnet form. In spite of their artificiality, however, some of the alphabetical poems possess considerable literary charm, as, for example, Psalms xxxiv. and xxxvii.

The following is a list of the thirteen Hebrew acrostics: Psalms ix. and x. (which probably formed originally one), xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv., Lamentations i., ii., iii., iv., and Proverbs xxxi. 10–31. They may be classified as follows:—

(i.) *The alphabet formed by the initial letters of each line.* Of this nature are the twin Psalms cxi. and cxii. Each consists of twenty-two lines divided into ten stanzas, the first eight stanzas containing two lines each, and the last two stanzas three lines each. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are thus exactly provided for.

(ii.) *The alphabet formed by the initial letters, not of the lines, but of the stanzas.* Of these there are several kinds.

(*a*) Stanzas of two lines. Psalms xxv., xxxiv., cxlv., Proverbs xxxi. (*vv.* 10–31), and Lamentations iv.

(*b*) Stanzas of three lines. Lamentations i. and ii.

(*c*) Stanzas of four lines. Psalm xxxvii.

(iii.) *A multiple alphabet formed by the initial letter of the stanzas.* Lamentations iii. consists of twenty-two three-lined stanzas, and each line of the first stanza begins with *Aleph*, each line of the second with *Beth*, etc., thus forming by its initials a triple alphabet. Psalm cxix. consists of twenty-two strophes, each strophe containing eight two-lined stanzas. All the eight stanzas of the first strophe begin with *Aleph*, the eight stanzas of the second strophe begin with *Beth*, and so forth, the verse initials thus forming an eight-fold alphabet. Psalms ix. and x. were probably formed originally on the model of Lamentations iii., but the design is imperfectly carried out, and is broken by the insertion of several verses from another psalm at the beginning of Psalm x. Some of the other acrostics, also, are slightly imperfect.

Stanzas or Verses.—It is clear from the alphabetical poems

that Hebrew poetry was sometimes arranged in stanzas or verses, but this was a comparatively rare device. Other examples are afforded by the poems which have a chorus or refrain, for in such poems a division is undoubtedly intended, though the stanzas are not always of equal length. The earliest example is probably the Song of Miriam (Exod. xv.), in which we are told that the opening verse was also sung as a refrain: "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea" (*vv.* 20, 21). How often the ode was interrupted by this refrain we are not told, but we may hazard the conjecture that it was at the end of the eighth, the thirteenth, and the eighteenth verses, where breaks occur naturally; and if so, it consisted originally of three stanzas. Other examples are:—

(2) Psalms xlii. and xliii. (originally one) divided into three nearly equal stanzas, with the refrain:—

> "Why art thou so vexed, O my soul?
> And why art thou so disquieted within me?
> O put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank Him,
> Which is the health of my countenance, and my God."

(3) Psalm xlvi. divided into two stanzas by the refrain:—

> "The Lord of Hosts is with us,
> The God of Jacob is our refuge."

(4) Psalm lvii. having two stanzas of almost equal length, the refrain in this case being:—

> "Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens,
> And Thy glory above all the earth."

(5) Isaiah ix. 8 to x. 4, a poem on the vengeance of Jehovah, consisting of four stanzas, each ending:—

> "For all this His anger is not turned away,
> But His hand is stretched out still."—*Isa.* ix. 12, 17, 21; x. 4.

When we turn from the form to the spirit of poetry we find that almost every kind of verse in use among the moderns had its counterpart in ancient Hebrew writings. The *Drama* is represented by *Job* and the *Song of Songs;* the former is essentially dramatic in spirit, and the latter has some affinities

with the pastoral play, for there can be no doubt that we must understand its verses to be spoken by *dramatis personæ* and a chorus. The verse, however, of the *Song of Songs* is purely lyric, and it may perhaps best be described in the words of Ewald, as "an undeniable Hebrew opera." The *Ode* is magnificently represented by the triumphal Songs of Miriam (Exod. xv.) and Deborah (Judges v.), and the *Elegy* by David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 19–27); while the two forms are combined in the powerful and sombre verses in which was foretold the coming overthrow of Babylon (Isa. xiv. 4–27). The Old Testament contains several grand poems of this type, and many others were probably included in the two lost collections—*The Book of the Wars of Jehovah* (Num. xxi. 14) and *The Book of Jasher, or the Upright* (Joshua x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18). Of *Gnomic or Didactic* poetry *Proverbs* is, of course, the best example; but specimens may also be found in some of the psalms and in parts of the prophetical books. Much of the sententious verse of the Old Testament is occupied with the praise of knowledge, both secular and religious, and with insistence upon its superlative value to life and character. Two of the poems which have wisdom for their theme—Wisdom's Plea (Prov. viii.) and the Quest of Wisdom (Job xxviii.)—are unsurpassed for sustained loftiness and beauty. It was, however, in the *lyric* form of verse that the Hebrews excelled, for the unfettered nature of Hebrew poetry lent itself with peculiar force to the vivid and picturesque expression of every phase of emotion. In this form were cast those ancient fragments which are embedded in the earlier historical records of Israel, *e.g.* the lines addressed by Lamech to his wives, beginning, "Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech" (Gen. iv. 23, 24), the *Song of the Well* (Num. xxi. 17, 18), and the fragment of an Amorite ballad (Num. xxi. 27–30). From such fragments as these to long poems of the utmost perfection and finish every kind of lyric utterance is to be found in the Old Testament. It may truly be said that there is no mood of joy or sorrow, love or hate, hope or fear, penitence or aspiration, no per-

plexity in face of life's problems, no awe in prospect of death, no delight in nature, no feeling of trust in God, no form of prayer or of praise, which does not find its perfect utterance in one or other of the sweet singers of Israel—and that, too, in language which seems native to men of every century and every country. And while every poetic quality—with the single exception, perhaps, of humour, which was alien to the intense and serious nature of Hebrew genius—is to be found in Hebrew poetry, it is in the highest quality of all that it excels. There can be little doubt that its most striking characteristic is its sublimity, and that in no other books are sublime passages so frequent and so majestic. Take, for example, two passages describing the Advent of Jehovah, in Habakkuk iii. 3–16, and Psalm xviii. 6–19: the presentment is anthropomorphic, it is true, for thus only could the subject be popularly described; but in what other literature could physical imagery produce so elevated a conception? And in such sublime passages the excellence does not lie in the form, which, as we have seen, differs less from prose than in most other languages: it lies in the vividness of the language employed and the splendour of the imagination. It is not in accidents, but in essentials, that Hebrew poetry is supreme.

The reader must not suppose that only that is poetry which is printed as such in the Revised Version. The writings of the Hebrew prophets, for the most part, conform to the canons of Hebrew poetry as closely as do the Psalms. In reading Isaiah, for example, when an historical chapter is reached the difference between it and the poetic matter in which it is embedded is felt in an instant. The only parts of the prophetic writings which can be described as prose, in addition to the historical chapters in Isaiah, are Haggai, Daniel, Jonah (except chap. ii.), and parts of Ezekiel and Zechariah. Malachi may be described as a sort of middle style, a poetic prose analogous to Ruskin and much of Carlyle in English.

JOB

Job, as it is the most magnificent, so also is the longest poem which has come down to us in that collection of Hebrew

literature which we call the Bible. In some aspects it may be regarded as a drama, for the story of mental conflict which it brings before us is set forth by means of dialogue, in which the speakers may not inaptly be described as *dramatis personæ*, and it inevitably recalls those Greek tragedies which deal with the struggle between fate and human will. In other aspects, however, *Job* may be described as a philosophical poem; it reminds us of *In Memoriam*, and is concerned with the mystery of pain as the modern work is with the mystery of death. The terms Epic and Parable, which have also been applied to it, seem much less appropriate. Indeed, there is no one term which will fitly describe it, for it belongs to no class; it stands unique in the world's literature, a thing apart.

What is the question which the book proposes to solve? If we accept the guidance of the Prologue it is this: Is it possible for a human being to serve God from absolutely disinterested motives, uninfluenced by any system of rewards and punishments? (i. 9–11). But before we read far we learn that the poem is concerned with a much larger question. How can the justice of God be reconciled with the misery which is in the world, and especially with the unmerited suffering of the righteous? The theory conventionally held in Job's time, and long after, was that God always punished the wicked and rewarded the righteous *in this life*, and to question this dogma was looked upon as the height of impiety. It was inevitable, of course, that the difficulties surrounding this teaching should sooner or later have made themselves felt, and in some of the most interesting of the psalms (xxxvii., xlix., lxxiii.) one of these difficulties is discussed, namely, why the wicked sometimes prosper; and the solution is offered that their prosperity is but temporary, and prepares the way for a sudden and terrible reverse. In *Job*, however, the mystery is discussed in no superficial manner; the awful problems involved are frankly stated; every partial answer is rejected, and every fallacy brought forward in the attempt to solve them is pitilessly exposed. Job's three friends represent the conventional opinions of the time, but it must not be supposed that their speeches are therefore to be read as contributing nothing to religious truth. Whatever the exceptions may be, the laws that

righteousness is blessed, and that the wages of sin is death, are laws widely operative and plainly discernible; and these and other truths are most nobly and vividly expressed in the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Job, on the other hand, represents the sincere and sensitive soul which under the pressure of suffering grows impatient of the unrealities of conventional opinion, and is impelled to probe to the bottom the mysteries which torture it. He is, in fact, in the poem anything but the "patient" sufferer which popular misconception has made him. He comes before us, especially in the earlier speeches, as a soul in revolt, cursing the day of his birth, crying out for death, challenging the justice of God's providence, denouncing the oppression of the poor in town and country in much the same fierce spirit as characterises the modern Socialist (xxiv.). The reader must be prepared to recognise fearless sincerity rather than submissive meekness as the dominant note of the patriarch's character.

The work consists of five parts.

(1) A prose prologue describing the misfortunes of Job, etc. (i. and ii.).

(2) Three cycles of speeches in which Job and his friends take part (iii.–xxxi.).

(3) The discourses of Elihu, a young man whose dissatisfaction with the colloquies of his elders leads him to attempt to supply their deficiencies (xxxii.–xxxvii.).

(4) Jehovah's reply to Job (xxxviii.–xlii. 6).

(5) A prose epilogue relating the prosperity of Job in his latter years (xlii. 7–17).

A kind of crescendo marks the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; that is to say, Eliphaz is the most considerate of the three, Zophar the most violent and pitiless. It is noticeable, too, that with each recurring speech the friends seem to grow harder and less sympathetic. In the first cycle they do but generalise upon the connection between sin and suffering; but in the last cycle even Eliphaz boldly charges Job with all those transgressions which a rich man in the East was liable to commit (xxii. 6–10), basing his charges, not, of

course, upon knowledge, but upon the axiom that such awful sufferings as those of Job *must* be the consequence of awful sins.

Job, on the other hand, who under the crushing weight of his unparalleled sufferings at first uttered such "wild and whirling words," seems, on the whole, to grow calmer and more controlled as the dialogue proceeds. But he contends to the end that his sufferings are unmerited; he maintains that he has never been guilty of impurity either in deed or thought (xxxi. 1, 9, etc.); that he has ever kept himself free from the stain of idolatry (xxxi. 26, 27); that he has sided with the weak, and been charitable to the poor (xxix. 11 ff., etc.); and that he has reverenced the human brotherhood even in a slave (xxxi. 13–15). It was not unreasonable, therefore, in him to expect a special blessing from God:—

> "Then I said, I shall die in my nest,
> I shall multiply as the sand" (xxix. 18).

He denies that God's justice is to be plainly read in the government of the world, and he brushes aside with a ruthless hand the sophistries by which the three friends support their contentions. When they argue that the children of the wicked shall be cut off, or shall be reduced to abject poverty, Job retorts that often the very opposite is true:—

> "They send forth their little ones like a flock,
> And their children dance.
> They sing to the timbrel and harp,
> And rejoice at the sound of the pipe" (xxi. 11, 12).

When they hint that if God lets the wicked continue in prosperity the punishment is only delayed till the next generation, Job rejoins that there is no real justice in that arrangement:—

> "Ye say, God layeth up his iniquity for his children.
> Let Him recompense it unto himself,
> Let his own eyes see his destruction,
> And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
> For what pleasure hath he in his house after him,
> When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?"
> (xxi. 19–21).

Indeed, again and again, in describing the dealings of Providence as they present themselves to his tortured soul, Job comes perilously near to positive blasphemy, as in chapter ix.:—

> "If the scourge slay suddenly,
> God will mock at the trial of the innocent.
> The earth is given into the hand of the wicked:
> He covereth the faces of the judges thereof;
> If it be not He, who, then, is it?" (*vv.* 23, 24).

It must be remembered, however, that these wild cries are the outcome of ignorance and suffering, not of sin. They are evidence of Job's desperate sincerity; they show what torture it occasioned him to be compelled to doubt God's love and justice. And we shall miss the whole teaching of the book if we fail to note that throughout Job cleaves desperately to righteousness. Even when he argues that God causes the sinner to prosper, he yet adds: "The counsel of the wicked is far from me" (xxi. 16). "Till I die," he says, "I will not put away mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (xxvii. 5, 6). And when his wild mood calms somewhat, and he utters the magnificent passage on wisdom (xxviii.), in which he asserts the utter futility of all man's search into the mysteries that surround him, he concludes that the darkness should only make men cleave closer to God; that, baffled in their intellectual quest, they should fall back upon the moral instincts:—

> "Behold, the fear of God, that is wisdom;
> And to depart from evil is understanding."

The speech of the younger man, Elihu, is on much the same lines as that of the three friends, but he adds one truth that they had forgotten; he points out that when calamity befalls a righteous man it is not *necessarily* punitive, it is often intended to ripen virtues in which he is backward, and to render a good man still better (xxxiii. 14–30).

The interposition of Jehovah, who answers Job from the whirlwind (xxxviii.–xli.), does not solve the mystery with which the poem is concerned. Job's afflictions might have been justified either by reference to the purpose of them, as re-

vealed in the Prologue, or, taking them as representative of all unmerited suffering, by a clear revelation of a future state. Jehovah, however, in His answer, is silent upon both these subjects. It was part of the discipline of the human race that they should wrestle with such perplexities, should "seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him"; and the time for this discipline to be relaxed was not yet. But it is noteworthy that Job, in his desperate search for some outlet from his darkness, did not fail to catch faint gleams of the truth. In the fourteenth chapter (*vv.* 13–15, R.V.) immortality has already become to Job a pious aspiration—almost a possibility; and in the nineteenth chapter, in the passage which the Burial Service has made so familiar to us (*vv.* 23–7), the patriarch attains, momentarily at least, to a conviction that a future life shall compensate for the seeming inequalities of the present, though the reader should note that in Job's mouth the word Redeemer (Goël) means not One who shall make atonement for his sins, but One who shall vindicate his righteousness. Upon this truth, however, which experience revealed partially to Job, the Divine Voice is silent. It was left to Christ to bring life and immortality to light. Jehovah does not condescend to argue with His servant, or to answer directly his pleadings. The sublime passages which are put into the mouth of the August Speaker consist simply of a string of questions, which challenge Job to explain or imitate the marvels of creation. But these indirect allusions to the wisdom and power and goodness of God, as revealed in His works, are sufficient to humble to the dust the rash mortal who had challenged his Maker:—

> "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer Thee?
> I lay mine hand upon my mouth.
> Once have I spoken, but I will not answer;
> Yea twice, but I will proceed no further" (xl. 4, 5).
>
> "Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
> Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
> . . . . . .
> I had heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth Thee,
> Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"
> (xlii. 3, 5, 6).

This brief examination of the contents of the book will help us to gather up the lessons it is intended to teach. From the Epilogue, in which Jehovah declares of the three friends, "Ye have not spoken the thing which is right as My servant Job hath," it appears that one purpose of the poem is to show that the honest recognition of difficulties is more helpful to religion and more pleasing to God than the repetition of theological conventions; it justifies in fact the assertion of the modern poet:—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

And from the Divine answer to Job the lesson derivable would seem to be that the refuge from life's perplexities is to be found, not in knowledge, but in trust, and that for such a trust even Nature herself gives us sufficient warrant. But taking the work as a whole it is clear that it was intended by its author to refute the theory then dominant, that afflictions are invariably the punishment of sin, and that prosperity and suffering are always distributed in this life in strict proportion to merits and demerits.

Two critical questions have much exercised the minds of commentators. In chapter xxvii. Job seems to affirm what he had denied, and to insist, in language very like that of the three friends, that God *does* punish the wicked in this world. This has led to the surmise that this speech really belongs not to Job, but to Zophar. The best explanation is, however, that Job here has recourse to irony. His quondam friends, now become his enemies, had insisted again and again that the wicked would be punished. Well, by their want of sympathy and their unjust charges *they* were acting wickedly, and though Job asserted that the wicked did sometimes prosper, he did not deny that as a rule sin was dogged by disaster; and so he proceeds to draw a graphic picture of what his friends may expect if they continue hard and unjust as at present. That this is the true explanation of the passage is rendered probable by the words in which it is introduced:—

> "Let mine enemy be as the wicked,
> And let him that riseth up against me be as the unrighteous" (*v.* 7).

The other difficulty is presented by the speech of Elihu. It is urged that this speech destroys the symmetry of the poem, and that though occasionally it rises to a strain of considerable eloquence, it is yet on the whole below the level of the rest of the book. It is certainly remarkable to find it stated, on the interposition of Jehovah, that the Lord answered *Job* out of the whirlwind, although the speaker during the six preceding chapters was not Job, but Elihu. In the Epilogue, again, judgement is passed upon Job and the three friends, but Elihu is altogether ignored. These facts lead many modern critics to assume that chapters xxxii.–xxxvii. were added by a later hand. Possibly Renan's ingenious guess may be well founded, that these chapters were added by the poet who wrote the rest of the book, but in old age when his style had become less brilliant.

Who was the author of *Job?* Upon this question even conjecture is silent; the name of one of the greatest poets the human race has produced must remain for ever unknown. In what age was it written? On the face of it it would seem to be written in patriarchal times, before the dawn of Israel's history. There is no mention of Jewish institutions or traditions, and neither Job nor his friends were members of the Chosen Race; we are far removed from the atmosphere of Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness, "we breathe, at every breath we draw, the free air of the early world." Modern critics, however, are disposed to assign the work to a somewhat late date, approximate to the time of Jeremiah (*circa* B.C. 625); and the perfect illusion of patriarchal times which the work produces is due, they say, to the consummate genius of the writer. So far as this conclusion is based upon the "advanced social state" presupposed in the book, and the "considerable range and faculty of observation covered by its author,"* the proofs which archæology has recently accumulated, that a very high state of civilisation existed in the East thousands of years before Abraham, are a sufficient answer to it. But the conclusion is supported by linguistic and other

* Driver.

considerations which are not so easily met. Happily the question of date is of little more than antiquarian interest. The drama is a spiritual drama, independent of time and space; its scenes are continually being re-enacted in the experience of individual souls; and it was this, doubtless, which caused Carlyle to write: "One feels as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book; all men's book."

Apart from any theory of inspiration *Job* is universally acknowledged to be one of the masterpieces of human genius. Shelley describes it as "of irresistible grandeur in plan and of unequalled sublimity in its imagery." Carlyle writes: "There is nothing, I think, in the Bible or out of it of equal literary merit"; and Froude, in the brilliant essay in his *Short Studies*, describes it thus: "An extraordinary book, a book of which it is little to call it unequalled of its kind, and which will one day, perhaps, when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far above all the poetry of the world."

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The literal meaning of the word rendered *Psalms* is "praise-songs," and the Psalter was really the hymn-book of the Hebrew race. It must have assumed its present form at latest about the year 150 B.C., for about that date the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, known as the Septuagint, was completed, and the Septuagint Version is practically the same as our own. There seems little doubt that some of the psalms (*e.g.* xliv., lxxiv., lxxix.) belong to the Maccabean age, and were written about this very time; and we may therefore describe the Psalter as the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of the Jewish race about the year B.C. 150. An analogy drawn between it and our own *Hymns Ancient and Modern* will help us to understand many of its peculiarities.

First, how far back did the compilation extend? A single psalm (xc.) is attributed to Moses, but without certainty. Excluding this, it is claimed for the Psalter that it consists of

poems written between the Age of David and that of the Maccabees, from about 1050 to 150, or in other words that it covers a period of about nine hundred years. How does this compare with *Hymns Ancient and Modern?* Including the hymns translated from Greek and Latin, of which there are many, our hymn-book covers fifteen centuries, and only during five of these has there been a printing-press to aid the preservation of literature. If those who sat down in 1861 and compiled a hymnal for the English Church were able to put fifteen centuries under contribution, it can occasion no surprise if those who finally revised the Psalter about 150 B.C. could go back nine centuries.

We are accustomed to speak of the Psalter as if it were a single book; but, accurately, it is not one book, but five, drawn up at different times and placed side by side. In the Revised Version this division is rightly maintained, and even in the Authorised and Prayer-book Versions it may be traced by means of the Doxology with which (in accordance with a custom not uncommon in Eastern literature) each book closes. Book I. comprises Psalms i. to xli.; Book II., xlii. to lxxii.; Book III., lxxiii. to lxxxix.; Book IV., xc. to cvi.; Book V., cvii. to cl.* There can be no doubt that these Books were compiled in the order in which they have come down to us; yet we are not to imagine that all the early psalms were comprised in the first Book, and none but late psalms in the fifth. An analogy with *Hymns Ancient and Modern* may help us here. A few years ago an Appendix was issued, and this contains many hymns written since 1861; but also it goes over exactly the same ground as the original edition, and contains a sprinkling of ancient hymns. It is tolerably certain that originally the compilations were distinct, and that the various editors worked quite independently. This is shown by the remarkable fact that the same psalms, with slight variations, occur more than once, just as nowadays

* There is some reason to believe, however, that originally the Books were three, and that they were altered into five in imitation of the Pentateuch, the original divisions being Book I., i. to xli.; Book II., xlii. to lxxxix.; Book III., xc. to cl.

we may find the same hymn, with or without a slight change, in, say, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and the *Hymnal Companion.* Thus Psalm liii. in Book II. is the same as Psalm xiv. in Book I., and Psalm lxx. the same as verses 13 to 17 of Psalm xl. And in Book V. Psalm cviii. consists of five verses of Psalm lvii. added to six verses of Psalm lx., these verses, of course, belonging to Book II. Clearly if the compilers of the later books were endeavouring merely to supplement the earlier, they would never have incorporated into their collections psalms which they knew had already appeared. Another proof of the independence of the various compilations is found in the fact of the varying use of the two names of God—Jehovah and Elohim. It would appear that there were periods when one name was customarily in use, and periods when opinion favoured the other name. Thus in Book I. Jehovah occurs nearly twenty times as often as Elohim; in Book II. Elohim five times as often as Jehovah; in Books IV. and V. the name Jehovah alone occurs. And the curious thing is that if the Elohim editor incorporates any psalm or part of a psalm from a Book which prefers to speak of God as Jehovah, he deliberately changes the name to Elohim. These facts are mentioned because they will help us to see clearly what the history of the Psalms has been. The several Books were plainly quite independent collections of praise-songs, made at different periods, and based, as could be plainly shown did space allow, upon a still larger number of compilations. About the year 150 B.C. an editor placed the five Books side by side, and perhaps added Psalm cl. as a kind of final doxology. Hence our Psalter as we have it.

An examination of the musical inscriptions which precede many of the psalms further illustrates the close analogy between the Psalter and a modern hymn-book. We can all recollect the hymn-books which had immediately after the number the name of the tune to which it should be sung. The same custom prevailed among the ancient Jews, and this is the explanation of some of the inscriptions which once

puzzled commentators. Thus Psalm xxii. is to be sung to tune "The Hind of the Dawn"; Psalm lvi. to "The Silent Dove in Far-off Lands"; Psalms lvii., lix., and lxxv. are to be sung to tune "Destroy Not"; Psalm ix. to "The Death of the Son"; and so forth. Comment has sometimes been made on the strangeness of those titles, but the New Zealander of the year 3000 may be just as puzzled on looking over the tunes which head the words in some of our hymn-books, such as "Golden Sheaves," "Old Martyrs," "Showers of Blessing," Metzler's "Redhead," and "St. Joseph of the Studium." In some of the Presbyterian hymn-books the contents are distinguished as hymns, psalms, paraphrases, or anthems. The Jews similarly discriminated. The inscription translated "A Song," meant a psalm to be sung with instrumental accompaniment; "Shiggaion," an irregular ode; "A Song of Ascents," probably a psalm to be sung whilst going up to the yearly festivals at Jerusalem, and so forth. In some of our hymns we have verses to be sung by trebles only, others by men only; Alamoth (after the manner of a maiden) probably means soprano alone, and Sheminith (upon the octave below) men alone. Apparently there were no elaborate marks of expression such as we use; the oft-recurring "Selah" probably meant that either voices or instruments, or both, were to be raised, and if so it was equivalent to our forte. It must be admitted that the meanings of many of these inscriptions cannot be determined with absolute certainty, but there is little doubt that they can all be paralleled by words or signs in use in modern hymn-books.

Let us pass now to those more important inscriptions which profess to tell us the names of the authors or the circumstances under which the Psalms were written. Some of these inscriptions may embody trustworthy traditions, but it must be admitted at once that they are far from being absolutely reliable, and must have been added many centuries after the events and persons of which they speak. Bishop Perowne puts the matter concisely when he says: "The inscriptions of the Psalms are like the subscriptions of the

Epistles of the New Testament. They are not of any necessary authority, and their value must be weighed by the usual critical processes." Again and again the title is contradicted by the contents of the psalm. This is the case with several of the seventy-three attributed to David; many cannot possibly be his. Psalms v., xxvii., xxviii., lxv., lxviii., cxxxviii., all speak of the Temple, and this we know was not in existence in David's time. In Psalm lviii. the writer denounces certain unjust judges whom he is powerless to remove, and prays that Heaven's vengeance may fall on them; this could scarcely have been written by David, who was an absolute monarch, and would have made short work of such evil-doers. In other psalms (lxix., lxxxvi., cix.) the writer is a poor and needy man who is cruelly reproached for his religion; the language might suitably have been used for one of the Babylonish exiles, but is incongruous in the mouth of a reigning monarch. Psalm lix. is stated to have been composed by David when his house was watched by Saul's messengers; but in reality the writer is praying against the violence of the heathen: "Thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. . . . Let the heathen know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth." Again, Psalm lxxxvi. is made up largely of passages from older psalms, and so, of course, must have been written long after David's time. Nor are the ascriptions to other authors more trustworthy. Psalms lxxiv. and lxxix. are attributed to Asaph, a contemporary of David, and yet they speak of the burning of the Temple! From these facts, among others, it is clear that these inscriptions are not to be depended upon. This does not prove, of course, that David did not write many psalms, but it proves that this question must be settled on other grounds than that of the unauthoritative inscriptions. Nor must it be supposed that we are always losers by being obliged to give up these historical notices. In Psalm lix., for instance, an intelligent person is only puzzled by being told that it was written by David "when Saul sent and they watched the house to kill him"; the

psalm at once gains in grandeur when we realise that it is not danger to David's person but danger to the national religion that its author is lamenting. Thus, an examination of these inscriptions certainly brings home to us the fact that the Psalms are anonymous. That many of them were written by David, however, we cannot doubt. In the Second Book of Samuel, much of which is admitted by everyone to have been written shortly after David's reign, he is described as the "sweet psalmist of Israel," and tradition would not so entirely have identified his name with Hebrew psalmody if he had not been its founder and one of its chief glories. All critics admit that he wrote the stately and pathetic elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan. True, the style of this elegy is different from that of the Psalms, but the difference of subject is quite enough to account for that, and the genius which was capable of producing the elegy was capable of producing even the finest of the psalms. In 2 Samuel xxii. the whole of Psalm xviii. is quoted, and attributed to David, and this is admittedly one of the finest poems in the whole of the Psalter.

On the whole, then, we may, I think, feel sure that David had much to do with the Psalter, though, unless we may except the eighteenth, we cannot be absolutely certain which psalms are his. On internal evidence alone eighteen psalms, or parts of psalms, may be attributed to him, and possibly he wrote many others. That some of the psalms are of a composite character is certain, and this would, in any case, make it more difficult to detect the authors. Even in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, if we look at the list of writers, we find some hymns due to several hands, although the compilers have made it a rule to preserve hymns unchanged wherever possible. Thus, "Oft in danger, oft in woe," is by Henry Kirke White, Fanny Fuller Maitland, and others; "Brightly gleams our Banner" was written by the Rev. J. T. Potter and altered by an unknown hand; several hymns have been changed, or added to by the compilers, and so forth. We find the same peculiarities in the Psalter. In some cases new psalms have been

composed by taking verses of two previous compositions and piecing them together. Psalm cviii., for instance, is made out of verses from Psalms lvii. and lx. Just as in the Rome of to-day comparatively modern buildings contain stones which may have formed part successively of the Rome of the ancient Republic, the Rome of the Christian emperors, and the Rome of the mediæval Popes, even so verses in the Psalms have been embedded in successive strata of psalmody. Thus Psalm cxliv. is a perfect mosaic. The first twelve verses contain the following quotations: Psalm xviii. 1, 2, 34, 47; viii. 4; xviii. 9, 14, 15, 16, 50; xxxix. 5, 6; xii. 2; xxxiii. 2, 3; in fact, there is hardly a word in it that is not borrowed; then follow verses 12–15, which form in reality a quite distinct poem, and can hardly be made to blend with what precedes them by any legerdemain—indeed, Bishop Perowne abandons the attempt, and prints these verses separately. If we consider these facts, we see how hopeless must be the endeavour to discover the names of authors. And for my part I think it is just as well that the Psalms should be disconnected from names and circumstances, for thus we learn that their teaching is of universal application, and that they express the aspirations and emotions not of this man and that man, but of all humanity.

On examining the Psalter a careful reader is at once struck by the variety of its contents. They range in length from a psalm of a hundred and seventy-six verses to a psalm of two. Many of them are of a most artificial character, for instance, the twin psalms—the 111th and the 112th—each consisting of twenty-two lines, each line consisting of three words, and both being cast in an acrostic form, so that the first line begins with *Aleph*, the second *Beth*, and so through the entire Hebrew alphabet. But, on the other hand, some of the psalms are of a most spontaneous character, and seem to well up from the heart of the singer without premeditation. Again, some are instinct with genius in every line, and others are the mere rehearsal of historical facts. And yet with all this variety of form there is not one that may not be made available for reproof, for correction, or for instruction in the way of right-

eousness. Again, we are struck by the variety of subject, and by the fact that the Psalter includes elements which are not to be found in our hymn-books. Sometimes the poet takes a single phenomenon of nature and makes a Psalm of Praise out of that; thus Psalm xxix. might be entitled, "The Thunderstorm"; the writer watches a storm advancing over the Mediterranean, and sees in it the manifestation of God. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, and the glory of God thundereth," and so he goes on to describe how the storm breaks the cedars, and rocks the forests of Lebanon, and splits the forked lightning (*v.* 7), and makes the hinds calve prematurely, and strips the woods bare—and so he concludes, "In His temple everything crieth, Glory!" See also the beautiful poem on the sun (the first six verses of Psalm xix., which some critics think were not originally connected with the verses which follow them). The ancient Jew lived in the everyday possession of a truth which to Tennyson was a mere peradventure, that "the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains" are, in very truth, but "the vision of Him who reigns."

So again the national element is strong in the Psalter. In our hymn-books you may read through from end to end and hardly find a national or social note struck anywhere. But the Hebrew *Hymns Ancient and Modern* is full of national aspiration, patriotic ardour, and the celebrations of signal triumphs or deliverances. Had England realised as clearly as the ancient Jew that God is the God of peoples as well as of individuals, there can be no doubt that the destruction of the Spanish Armada three hundred years ago would have called forth many poems of praise which would be sung in our churches to this day; indeed the Psalter is largely made up of odes, written in celebration of just such deliverances. Even lesser occasions did not go uncelebrated. When the Prince of Wales brought his fair bride to England, the poet laureate welcomed her in a fine bridal ode, but the ode is purely secular. If you would see how the ancient Jew celebrated a similar event, turn to Psalm xlv., which is a marriage ode, celebrating the

nuptials of a Jewish king with a foreign princess. The most prominent characteristic of the Psalter is its universality; and the one truth which we twentieth-century Christians have still to learn of the ancient Hebrew is that there is rightly no such thing as secular, but that religion should penetrate and leaven every phase of life, as much the social and the political as the individualistic.

In conclusion, it is scarcely needful to say that the Psalter is the very epitome of the soul-life; that there is no mood of gladness or despair, penitence or aspiration, indignation with wrong, or enthusiasm for the right; no thought which springs from communing with nature or musing upon the problems of life, which is not reflected back upon us from the Psalms mingled, as it were, with heavenly light. If a proverb may be described as the wisdom of many and the wit of one, many a psalm may be described as the dim religious feelings of the race kindled into expression by the genius of the individual; and this is why the Psalms so appeal to the common heart of man.

"We find within these souls of ours
Some wild seeds of a higher birth,
Which, in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers
Whose fragrance fills the earth.

"For all that is majestical
In life or death, since time began,
Is native to the simple heart of all,
The angel heart of man."

PROVERBS

Proverbs stands at the head of the wisdom-literature of the Old Testament. It is popularly known as *The Proverbs of Solomon*, but no intelligent reader will suppose the whole work to be the product of the Wise King's pen in the same sense as, for example, a prophetical book is the work of the author

whose name it bears. No other book in the Old Testament so readily splits up into the various strata composing it. "The traces of compilation present themselves at every turn."* When we examine its contents we find them to be of a very miscellaneous kind—compare, for example, the magnificent poem on Wisdom in chapter viii., the acrostic on the virtuous woman in chapter xxxi. (10–31), and the collection of detached sentences in the section x.–xxii. 16. The work, indeed, frankly presents itself as an aggregate of several collections, as is shown by the repetition of the same proverbs in different parts of the book, and by such expressions as "These also are Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out" (xxv. 1); "These also are sayings of the wise" (xxiv. 23, R.V.), etc. Nor can it be contended that the different writings here brought together were all by one hand. In some places the speaker is a courtier (xxv. 2–7); elsewhere he is a teacher who bids his pupil bring no discredit upon him (xxvii. 11); or again we meet with a section which appears to have been written by a nomadic herdsman (xxvii. 23–7). We can scarce suppose Solomon to have expressed that praise of monogamy which is implied in xviii. 22 and xix. 14, as well as in the beautiful passage on the virtuous woman (xxxi. 10, etc.). Moreover, it is expressly stated that the "words of Agur" (xxx.) and the "words of Lemuel" (xxxi. 1–9) are included in the work. While, therefore, it would seem certain that Solomon originated some of the pithy proverbs of Israel; while he may have made a collection of such as existed before his time, and probably gave to the Jewish wisdom-literature its originating impulse, it is impossible to look upon *Proverbs* as in any sense a Solomonic holograph. In a proverb, the experience which has been verified again and again in the life of humanity is at length crystallised into a pithy saying by the genius of some wise man, and these maxims are often such as could not have been composed in the study, but must have been struck off in the

* Dean PLUMPTRE.

clash of one wit with another during the busy intercourse of life. Thus the facts all tend to show that the book is a national collection of proverbs rather than the production of a single author. We prize its pages not because of any name attached to them, but because they embody the wisdom of the nation which God educated to be the religious teacher of the human race. It is this which gives its unique value to the Book of Proverbs, and places it in a category quite apart from the proverbial literature of any other nation.

The book may conveniently be divided into seven parts:—

I.—(chaps. i.–ix.) This section deals with the praise of Wisdom, and is addressed to an ideal "son," *i.e.* pupil or disciple. The whole is apparently the work of a single author, and that author a poet of no mean gifts. The chapter on Wisdom's plea (viii.) is particularly picturesque and impressive. This section forms a beautiful prologue to the work which follows, but whether it was originally written for that purpose, or has been adapted to it, is uncertain; judging from the opening verses, however, the former is the more likely supposition.

II.—(chaps. x.–xxii. 16). This section opens with the heading "The proverbs of Solomon." It is in complete contrast to the preceding section, as it consists of detached proverbs, written, all of them, in couplets, so that each forms a *distich*, *e.g.*:—

> "A wise son maketh a glad father,
> But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (x. 1).

This is generally held to be the oldest part of the book, and was probably compiled in the golden days of the monarchy.

III.—(chaps. xxii. 17 to xxiv. 34). This section consists less of proverbs strictly so called than maxims or hortatory sayings addressed to an individual. The maxims are generally arranged in four lines, *i.e.* they form *tetrastichs*, *e.g.*:—

> "Rob not the poor because he is poor,
> Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate;
> For the Lord will plead their cause
> And despoil of life those that despoil them" (xxii. 22, 23).

At xxiv. 23 an appendix is introduced, but its contents resemble the rest of the section except that the form of the verse is more varied.

IV.—(chaps. xxv.–xxix.) is the Hezekiah collection of proverbs attributed to Solomon. In this section, as in II., the *distich* is the prevailing form the proverb takes, and there are other affinities with II. That it belongs to the period of the monarchy is certain; there are many allusions to the king, and one to the prophet (xxix. 18).

V.—(chap. xxx.) "The words of Agur, son of Jakeh." Of the four persons mentioned in this section—Agur, Jakeh, Ithiel, and Ucal—nothing is known. Both the style and matter are distinct from other parts of the book, and it has been suggested that it is a specimen of foreign "wisdom" adapted by a Hebrew author. In verse 4 we seem to have an echo of *Job*.

VI.—(chap. xxxi. 1–9) contains "the words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." It consists of a few homely counsels against sensuality, and in favour of charity, addressed by the queen-mother to her son. Who King Lemuel was is unknown.

VII.—(chap. xxxi. 10–31) is an acrostic poem which describes with great vividness the domestic life of a model wife and mother in ancient Israel.

The inclusion of the Book of Proverbs in the canon is a witness against that spiritual infirmity which is known as "other-worldliness." It reminds us that religion is not concerned only with what goes on in the Church, with religious exercises, or with hours of pious meditation—these exist only to make us act as God would have us in our daily life; religion is concerned also with what goes on in the market and the forum and the home; with the up-bringing of children; with the conduct of business; with the relation of employer and employed; with political and social questions; with all those multifarious concerns which occupy by far the greater part of human life. *Proverbs* shows us man as he is to be seen engaged in his ordinary concerns—the merchant

trafficking in the bazaar, the courtier in the king's palace, the litigant prosecuting his lawsuit before the judges in the gate, the youth falling into the snare of the strange woman, knowing not that the dead are there and that her guests are in the depth of hell. It paints for us the drunkard, the sluggard, the fond and foolish father, the contentious wife, the busybody ever ready to meddle in the quarrel that does not concern him, and the good-natured man willing to shake hands and become surety for any stranger who may appeal to him. It helps us to see that these concerns are not outside the sphere of religion, that we may and must serve God in all such matters, must discipline ourselves to be shrewd, cautious, sagacious, diligent, otherwise we shall not be good and profitable servants. We may claim, if we will, that those books of Scripture which deal with other and more spiritual aspects of religion are the higher parts of the Bible, just as we may insist that the brain of man is higher than his digestive organs —so it is, both in its functions and its manifestations, but it is not more indispensable to existence; and similarly those books of the Bible which, like *Proverbs*, deal with what we may call the lower planes of life are not less necessary than the Gospel of St. John itself.

So too as regards the "wisdom" sections of Proverbs. There are many who tacitly assume that God does not care particularly about our minds being trained; it is a duty to grow in grace, but not to grow in knowledge; it is a duty to make use of our spiritual faculties, but it is no particular offence if we let our mental talents rust. This opinion is perhaps based upon the fact that men's educational opportunities are so unequal, but a candid examination would surely compel us to own that men's spiritual opportunities are correspondingly unequal. In any case a study of the wisdom-literature of the Hebrews makes it clear that whether we have ten talents or but one it is a duty, a *religious* duty, to cultivate our mental gifts to the very utmost of our power. And *Proverbs* seems especially designed to teach this. Nowhere in any literature are the praises of wisdom so eloquently sung,

nowhere are folly and ignorance so relentlessly chastised, nowhere are men so urged and exhorted to sacrifice everything for wisdom; and this may be taken to be its promise to every diligent student of its precepts: "Wisdom shall enter into thine heart, and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall watch over thee; understanding shall keep thee from evil" (ii. 11). In a word, *Proverbs* breaks down the barriers which we love to build between the world and the Church, between sacred and secular, and claims the wide realm of our commonplace life for God.

ECCLESIASTES

The title of this book is derived from the Greek Septuagint, where it appears as the representative of the Hebrew *Koheleth* which has been variously rendered Preacher or Debater. Koheleth is used throughout the work as a synonym of "the son of David, king in Jerusalem," *i.e.* Solomon, but there can be little doubt that Solomon was not the real author, and that his name was only assumed by a well-known and legitimate device for a literary purpose. The first to discern the truth was Luther, who did not, however, venture to broach it in his commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, but in private conversation—as recorded in his *Table Talk*—assigned the work to the time of the Maccabees (*circa* 150 B.C.). The first to maintain publicly that Solomon was not the author was Grotius, in his *Commentary on the Old Testament* (1644), and since then this opinion has continued to make way. There are still of course many who maintain that the traditional view is sound, and some, perhaps, there will always be; but if opinions on either side be weighed and not counted, the preponderance in favour of the modern view is overwhelming, for on this question the ablest of moderate and conservative critics, both in Germany and England, are at one with those who are mistrusted as "higher" critics. The late date rests mainly on

the evidence of the language, which is not that of the ancient Hebrew, but of a decadent time, when many Aramaic words crept into the Jewish vocabulary. As early as the middle of the seventeenth century Grotius perceived that there were many words in Ecclesiastes which "are not found elsewhere than in Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldæan paraphrasts," and it is now generally admitted that the intermixture of Aramaic words in it is larger than in any other Old Testament book. This fact naturally carries great weight; and Delitzsch goes so far as to say, "If the Book of Koheleth be of old Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language." But the modern view does not rest on the testimony of language alone. If the book be carefully examined it will become plain that it could not have been written by a great king ruling over a nation at the zenith of its power; it reflects neither the glory of Solomon nor any trace of that penitence with which he is credited in his old age. It is the work of a man into whose soul the iron of oppression has entered, and who is saddened at the sight of wrongs and injustices he is powerless to prevent. We cannot imagine Solomon writing, "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem" (i. 12), for he never ceased to be king; nor was he likely to describe himself as wiser "than all that were before me in Jerusalem" (i. 16), seeing he was but the second king of Israel that reigned there. Consider the following passage: "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler: folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth" (x. 5–7). That passage—and there are several like it—could never have been written by a powerful king whose duty it was to remedy the evils of which he complains, but it comes very naturally from an exile or a member of an oppressed race. Read the whole book through with the idea that it was written when the Jews were a dispersed nation, their representatives in Palestine "in great affliction and reproach," the different social strata jumbled up by a political cataclysm, the proud national hopes well-nigh

extinct, and it presents no difficulties. But imagine you are reading a work written by Solomon at a time of supreme national prosperity, and the work is full of anomalies, and you have no key to the moods of its author. From these and other considerations there is general agreement among the abler modern critics that Ecclesiastes was written somewhere between the later period of Persian rule (*circa* 340 B.C.) and some date before the Macedonian supremacy came to an end (say *circa* 200 B.C.). Within these limits it is impossible to fix any date with certainty, but there is much probability in the theory originated by Mr. Tyler* and elaborated by the late Dean Plumptre, that the author was a wealthy Jew who lived at Alexandria, and there in luxury and philosophical culture sought compensation for the loss of national and religious hopes which had left his nature impoverished; and who in old age recorded how vain his quest had been.

It must not, of course, be thought for one moment that this theory supposes the author of *Ecclesiates* to have been a literary forger—an Ireland or a Chatterton.

To speak one's own sentiments through the mask of some well-known historical personage in whose mouth they sound appropriate has been an innocent device practised in every literature and in every age. Sometimes this has been done in an endeavour to interpret an enigmatic character, as in Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi*, sometimes to put the author's own thoughts in a picturesque setting, as in Tennyson's *Ulysses*, occasionally the device has been used as a veil which half covers and half reveals, as when Mrs. Browning, disclosing some of the most intimate feelings of her own heart, attributed the sonnets in which she enshined them† to Portuguese poets. But of course in such cases there is no attempt to deceive. The matter is perhaps even better illustrated by an ancient instance almost contemporary with *Ecclesiastes*. The *Wisdom of Solomon* was for centuries quoted as Scripture and attributed to the Great King; it even now

* *Ecclesiastes*, W. Tyler (1874).

† *Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

forms part of the Apocrypha, and is read in the Church of England "for example of life and instruction of manners" (*Articles of Religion*, vi.). Yet, on the one hand, no critic of any school dreams of attributing it to Solomon; on the other hand, it has never been argued that the Alexandrian who wrote it, adopting Solomon's name, was attempting a fraud. Probably the contemporaries of "Koheleth" as little supposed Solomon to be the author of Ecclesiastes as the contemporaries of Tennyson supposed that Ulysses wrote the words which the poet puts into his mouth. We can well understand, however, how in an uncritical age the fascinating theory of Solomonic authorship, once started, would be eagerly adopted.

Besides date and authorship one critical question remains. It is maintained by some that the closing verses of chapter xii., from verse 9 to the end, were not written by the author, but constitute an epilogue, written perhaps by the President of the Sanhedrin, with the consent of his council, and conferring an *imprimatur* upon the book. In support of this it is urged that with the beautiful account of old age and death (xii. 1–7) and the recurrence of the mournful refrain, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (*v.* 8), the book comes to a natural conclusion; and further that verse 11, which speaks of the words of the wise as goads, and of the "masters of assemblies" as fastened nails, and of the "one shepherd" from whom all proceeds, is an allusion to the learned body which, with the assent of its president, was giving its approval to *Ecclesiastes*. There is a certain plausibility in such arguments. But, on the other hand, even the critics who contend for an epilogue are not agreed, some making it begin at verse 8, others at verse 9, others not till verse 13, and this diversity shows the weakness of an argument which rests upon a single strand of internal evidence. The closing verses are admitted to be in general harmony with what precedes, and on the whole there is nothing but plausible conjecture in support of the supposed "commendatory attestation."

Nothing would be gained by attempting to give an analysis of the book. It has no settled plan, the author giving im-

mediate expression to varying moods of pessimism, philosophical reflection, and religious faith as they alternate in his soul. The religious faith, it must be admitted, does not rise to a high level; it amounts only to fear of God and a belief that man's best interests are bound up in obedience to moral law. There are reflections which bear upon a future life, but these are inconsistent, if not contradictory (compare iii. 19 and xii. 7, etc.).

The inspiration of *Ecclesiastes*, it is clear, is of an indirect kind. We are not to read it as we should a Prophet or a Gospel. The conclusions at which the writer arrives are often not Christian truths; the sentiments he expresses are not Christian sentiments—indeed, they are frequently the very opposite. Not, indeed, that his book is quite without value on the positive side. "His aphorisms are often pregnant and just; they are prompted by a keen sense of right; and in his satire upon society he lays his finger upon many a real blot,"* and to this extent his teaching may have direct religious value. Then, further, he has permanently voiced a mood of constant recurrence in human history; his work "meets the necessity of a state of mind from which, perhaps, no period of the world's history has been quite exempt, and to which periods, like our own, of increasing luxury and advancing knowledge are especially liable,"† and there is positive advantage in that. By giving eloquent expression to humanity's unrest he has helped to soothe it. We may well rejoice that "in the great record of the spiritual history of the chosen and typical race a place has been kept for the sigh of defeated hopes, for the gloom of the soul vanquished by the sense of the anomalies and mysteries of human life."‡ But, after all, to teach *direct* religious truth was not in the commission which the Holy Ghost gave to "Koheleth." His work was written to state all the difficulties of life rather than to solve them. It is inspired, not merely in spite of, but because of, the fact that it often rouses our whole nature to protest against the conclusion at which it arrives. The value of Ecclesiastes consists in this: that it

* Driver. † Dean Plumptre. ‡ Dean Bradley.

shows how little the world can satisfy the soul of man apart from God; that one can drink deep of every earthly pleasure and yet be left hungering and thirsting; that the highest culture and the most varied experience can do nothing to solve the problem of existence by their own unaided efforts; in a word, its mission is to render us dissatisfied with the merely sensuous pleasures of earth, to sharpen our longing for the unseen things of the spiritual life, and to teach the soul that there is no rest for it but in God. It is the thoroughness with which it performs this function which proves it a divinely inspired book—a book without which the Bible would be incomplete, lacking one of its most essential elements.

CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS

Dramatic in form—for it consists of dialogue throughout—yet lyrical in spirit—for in place of speeches of the ordinary type we have songs—*Canticles* is best described in the words of Ewald as "an undeniable Hebrew opera." Perowne does not overpraise it when he says, "No pastoral poetry in the world was ever written so exquisite in its music, so bright in its enjoyment of nature, or presenting so true a picture of faithful love." It fully deserves its title of Song of Songs—meaning, of course, most beautiful of Songs.

Apart from any mystical or allegorical teaching which the poem may be intended to convey, it is obvious that it must have a primary meaning, by means of which the spiritual lessons are presented. According to the traditional view—supported in modern times by Delitzsch and others—the two principal characters in the drama are Solomon and a Shulamite maiden who became his bride, and the work consists of lyrical expressions of their love for one another. The modern and more probable view—which originated with J. S. Jacobi (1771), was supported powerfully by Ewald, and is accepted by most modern critics—adds to the two characters already mentioned

a third, the Shulamite's lover, from whom the Great King sought in vain to turn the affections of the fair peasant girl whom he had inveigled into his harem. The modern interpretation is almost certainly the true one. It may help the reader to a better understanding of the poem if I give a brief summary of the story as it may be gathered from the work itself if the modern theory be accepted.

The peasant heroine was a member of the tribe of Issachar, and was born at Shulem (or Shunem), in Central Palestine (vi. 13). She was an only daughter (vi. 9), but had several brothers much older than herself, who were very proud of her and jealous of her good name (viii. 8, 9). As she neared womanhood she developed a surpassing loveliness, and her affections were wooed and won by a young shepherd as handsome as herself (v. 16). The brothers were incensed at this attachment, and sought to interrupt it by making their sister work in the vineyard (i. 6), but in spite of their vigilance the lovers contrived many stolen interviews (ii. 8 ff.; iv. 8 ff., etc.) of an innocent character (viii. 1). One day, when the maiden had wandered into a garden of nuts to admire the opening beauties of spring, she suddenly found herself surrounded by the glittering retinue of King Solomon, who was then on a royal progress in the north (vi. 11, 12). She was hastening away in confusion, when a voice called on her to turn back (vi. 13), and the result of the incident was that she was either cajoled or carried by force to Jerusalem, and enrolled among the "threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number" (vi. 8). Solomon visited her repeatedly, and did his best to win her affection; but the flatteries of the king, the persuasions of the ladies of the harem, the splendours of the court, were powerless to move her or make her break her troth. At night she dreams pathetic dreams about her absent lover (iii. 1–4; v. 2–8), and all day her thoughts run upon the happy meetings she had had with her "beloved," her "friend" amid those pleasant country scenes in which her life had been passed. Love, she maintains, is not a thing to be bought, or bribed, or awakened by

artificial excitements; it is a sacred feeling which must arise spontaneously in the human heart if it is to possess any real value. Three times she replies to the cajoleries of the ladies of the harem in practically the same words:—

> "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> That ye stir not up nor awaken love
> Until it please" (ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4, R.V.).

Her persistence is at last rewarded. Solomon, with his "threescore queens, and fourscore concubines," is not guilty of his father's sin; he foregoes the poor man's one ewe lamb, and in the last chapter (viii. 5 ff.) we behold the heroine honourably restored to her native village and her humble lover. The words which towards the close of the book she addresses to the man to whom she had been so nobly true are certainly intended to be interpretative of the whole poem.

> "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
> For love is strong as death;
> Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
> The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
> A very flame of the Lord.
> Many waters cannot quench love,
> Neither can the floods drown it:
> If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
> He would utterly be contemned" (viii. 6, 7).

The following analysis of the book, for which in detail the present writer is responsible, but which is in substantial agreement with the views of all those who take the modern view, will, it is hoped, enable the reader to follow the drift of the work with ease.

i. 1–8. *A Harem Dialogue.*—Several voices are heard speaking. The inmates vie one with another in their praises of Solomon (1–4). The Shulamite begs the princesses not to despise her, if she is rustic and sunburnt; her brethren had made her keep their vineyard, "but," she adds pathetically, "my own vineyard have I not kept." She apostrophises her shepherd lover, and is ironically bidden by the ladies go and seek him.

i. 9–ii. 7. *Dialogue with Solomon.*—While he praises *her* (i. 9–11, 15; ii. 2) she praises only her *lover* (i. 12–14, 16; ii. 1, 3, 6). The passage closes with the refrain:—

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem," etc. (ii. 7).

ii. 8–17. *A Reminiscence.*—The Shulamite recalls how, on one spring day, her lover had looked in through the lattice, and had bidden her come out with him among the birds and flowers. This section contains a fragment of a vineyard song which he used to sing at her request:—

"Take up the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyard:
For our vineyards are in bloom."

iii. 1–5. *A Dream in the Harem.*—The Shulamite dreams that she goes out and searches in the streets of Jerusalem for her lover. The watchmen could give her no tidings of him, but almost immediately after she finds him, and, with the inconsequence of dreams, imagines she is in her native village, taking him to her mother's house. The narration of her dream concludes with the refrain, "I adjure you," etc.

iii. 6–iv. 7. *Solomon's Visit.*—A crowd looks on as the royal procession approaches Jerusalem, and various voices comment on the magnificence of Solomon, his escort, his palanquin, and bid the daughters of Jerusalem go forth to view him "in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (iii. 6–11). He has come, apparently, to consummate his union with the lovely Shulamite. He praises her beauty even more warmly than before, concluding:—

"Thou art all fair, my love,
And there is no spot in thee."

iv. 8–v. 1. *An Ideal Interview.*—The Shulamite gives no heed to the king's blandishments; her thoughts are ever with her peasant lover. In imagination she hears *him* praising her beauty (iv. 8–15), comparing her to all sweet and lovely things which a country life suggests. In fancy she responds, bidding him take her as his possession (iv. 16), and she seems to hear the rapturous tones in which her lover expresses his happiness (v. 1).

v. 2–8. *A Second Dream in the Harem.*—The Shulamite has yet another love dream. Her lover, wet with the dews of night, stands without, and begs her to open to him; but she pleads that, having laid aside her garment and washed her feet, she cannot rise and admit him. He puts his hand through the hole in the door, and her heart is moved for him; but when she draws back the bolt, lo! he has vanished. She seeks him in anguish through the dark streets, is beaten and insulted by the watchmen and the city guards. She concludes her narration of the dream by begging the daughters of Jerusalem to find her beloved, and tell him she is sick with love.

v. 9–vi. 3. *A Second Harem Dialogue.*—The ladies of the harem demand, What is thy beloved more than another beloved? In reply, the Shulamite gives a catalogue of his personal charms (10–16), concluding:—

> "His mouth is most sweet: yea he is altogether lovely.
> This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
> O daughters of Jerusalem."

They ask next where he is to be found (vi. 1). She replies enigmatically, He feedeth his flock among the lilies (vi. 2, 3).

vi. 4–viii. 4. *Final Dialogue with Solomon.*—Solomon celebrates again the beauties of the Shulamite. His similes are taken from town and court life, as the rustic lover's are from the country; he declares that she is beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners, etc.; the very queens and concubines cannot forbear praising her (vi. 4–10). In reply, the Shulamite recalls how she fell in with the retinue of Solomon in the nut garden, and was called back as she was retreating, and was carried off to Jerusalem (vi. 11–13). Solomon then continues to woo her with courtly similes; her thigh-joints are like jewels, the work of a cunning workman, her neck is like a tower of ivory, her eyes are like the pools of Heshbon, her head like Carmel, etc. (vii. 1–9). But when he goes on to speak of her mouth as like the best wine, she breaks in, Yes, but not for *his* lips, but for those of her beloved (vii. 9).* The Shulamite then takes up the dialogue

* So Driver, W. E. Griffis, etc. This interpretation turns upon "beloved" in verse 9 being masculine.

(vii. 10–viii. 4). She begins emphatically, "I am my *beloved's*," and she speaks dreamily of the bliss that would be hers were her desires gratified. Would, she says, that he were my brother, for then I could kiss him openly without blame (viii. 1). And so she brings her passionate utterance to an end by reiterating the refrain once more:—

> "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> That ye stir not up nor awaken love
> Until it please."

viii. 5 to end. *The Shulamite and her Lover Re-united.*—The villagers exclaim, as they see their fair neighbour returning, leaning on her lover. All the old familiar sights have acquired a fresh interest for her: she points out an apple tree under which she had once seen her beloved asleep, and the cottage in which he was born (viii. 5). Then she breaks into the splendid passage about true love already quoted as containing the moral of the whole poem (viii. 6, 7). She then recalls what her big brothers had said about her when a little girl; how they had promised that if she continued virtuous ("if she be a wall") they would honour her, and if she proved of loose character ("if she be a door") they would treat her with severity (viii. 8, 9). She claims that she has indeed proved a wall, having baffled the assaults of the most powerful monarch of the East. As for Solomon, let him keep his vineyard (harem?) and enjoy the princely profits thereof; but as for her, "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me" (viii. 10–12).

Her lover then bids her sing: she obeys in words of innocent coquetry.

> "Make haste, my beloved,
> And be thou like to a roe or a young hart
> Upon the mountains of spice."

And with this snatch of song the poem ends.

One critic at least has characterised this beautiful story as "odious, and of no apparent moral or religious significance"—a critic, be it noted, who believes the *Song* to be founded on the union of Solomon with one of his innumerable wives and concubines, and sees nothing incongruous or shocking in

that! But the story could only seem out of place in Holy Scripture to one who assigns to religion a very narrow sphere indeed, and leaves outside its pale the largest and most important tracts of human life. Consider how large a part love plays in the literature of every nation, how vividly it colours the experience of almost every life, how powerfully for evil or for good it influences character and conduct, and few will fail to appreciate and approve the words of Niebuhr: "I should think there was something wanting in the Bible if we could not find in it any expression for the deepest and strongest sentiment of humanity." To the ancient Jew it must have been a witness for monogamy against polygamy, for true and honest love as against the organised lust which then prevailed in kings' courts. And by the modern Englishman its lessons are not less needed. How much misery and sin is occasioned by marriages made for money, for position, for mere convenience, without that strong affection which can fuse two personalities into one; how often is a legal marriage made a cover for prostitution of the soul! The pulpit is silent on the subject, and men and women commit the most terrible sacrilege against the sanctities of human nature, commit a crime which will avenge itself not only on themselves but on their children, often with no consciousness of sin. So far from the poem, taken in its primary sense, being unworthy of the Bible, it is to be wished that the Church would take to heart the lessons it teaches, and inculcate them upon its children with growing insistence and earnestness.

But is there no secondary meaning? The Jews of later times saw in it a parable of the love of Jehovah to Israel, and generations of Christians have read it as typical of the love of Christ for His Church. Without speculating as to whether such parabolic meanings were originally intended by the author, we may say that the allegorical method of interpretation is certainly allowable when it tends to edification. Repeatedly in the Old Testament Jehovah is spoken of as the Husband of Israel; repeatedly in the New the Church is spoken of as the Bride of Christ; and we are quite justified

in drawing, as St. Paul did, a comparison between an earthly marriage and the soul's union with God, and in insisting that all lower forms of love are faint reflections of the higher. If, however, the poem is looked upon as *primarily* an allegory, the commentator is tempted to press the comparison into all the details of the *Song of Songs*, and so to fall into strange irreverence. If we get at and acknowledge the original meaning first all danger of this kind is removed.

From peculiarities of dialect and the familiarity shown by the author with localities in northern Palestine, it is extremely probable that the author belonged to *North* Israel, and that the work is an early one. "Recollections of Solomon and the pomp of his court appear to be relatively fresh."* The opening words, "The Song of Songs which is Solomon's," are of the nature of a title added in later times—an author would hardly call his own poem the Song of Songs—and therefore are not conclusive evidence as to the writer. If Solomon was indeed the author, he must have written in the dialect used in the northern part of his country, and not in that with which he was most familiar. That he should have written so strongly in favour of an ideal of love the reverse of that which he adopted in practice is certainly improbable, but not, as Driver says, "out of the question." Did not Burns, in the "Cotter's Saturday Night" (stanza 10), eloquently denounce the cruelty of that licentiousness which was his own besetting sin, and is not all literature full of such inconsistencies?

* Driver.

ON THE PREDICTIVE ELEMENT IN PROPHECY

TWO errors need to be carefully guarded against if the prophetic writings are to be read with intelligence; the first relates to the character of the prophet, the second concerns the nature of his predictions.

The popular conception of a prophet is that he was one whose main function was to foretell what would happen in the future. Neither the name by which the prophets were known nor the written works which they have left behind them support this conception. The most general term for a prophet in the Hebrew, *Nâbi*, signifies one who *bursts forth*, presumably under Divine influence and into spiritual utterance. The less common words, *Rôeh* and *Chôzeh*, translated "seer" in our version, indicate one who *sees*, and, in this connection, one with a more piercing spiritual glance than ordinary men. The English word prophet, again, means one who *speaks for* another—that other being in this case Jehovah. If we condense into one the meanings of these various terms, and picture to ourselves one who under strong ethical emotion is irresistibly moved to utter the truths revealed to him, who sees deeply into things spiritual, who speaks not in his own name but in that of God whose messenger he is, we arrive at a conception which corresponds exactly with that derived from a study of the prophetic writings. It is not denied, of course, that prediction was a part of the prophet's rôle, but it was at all times a subordinate part. The prophet was first and foremost an inspired preacher of righteousness, a censor of morals, a revealer of new truths, a religious

reformer. Even under the monarchy the theocracy was continued, and so we shall find again and again the prophets interfering in national and political affairs when a policy was pursued which was immoral in its issues or tended to weaken the nation's trust in Jehovah. There were prophets—such as Elijah and John Baptist—who left no writings behind them, but by a powerful personality and stirring appeals accomplished a religious revival; their work may be compared to that of Whitfield and Wesley in the eighteenth century. There were others whose influence was mainly exercised through writings which affected first the more thoughtful and cultured of their countrymen and so gradually leavened all classes; their work is analogous to that of Maurice in our own time. But in every case the aim was moral and practical, and the predictive element only entered into prophecy when it was helpful to the prophet's immediate purpose.

The second error to be guarded against concerns the nature of prophetic prediction. Too often this is regarded as purely magical. It is supposed that the prophet foresaw some event which would happen hundreds of years after his time and foretold it in language only to be understood when it had taken place. The Bible is thus turned into a book of conundrums, with the questions at one end and the answers at the other. A closer examination, however, shows that certainly in the majority of instances, and probably in all, what the prophet foretold came to pass in a primary sense during the lifetime of the generation to which it was addressed, though often this first fulfilment did not exhaust the prophecy which might be illustrated again and again in the course of centuries, and only find its final fulfilment in Christ. This truth has been expressed by the saying that a prophecy has "germinant and springing" fulfilments, just as a seed may be said to express its meaning in the leaves, in the bud, and in the blossom, and yet not fully declare the purpose of its creation till it develops the fruit. And often we are permitted to see clearly how the prophets could thus foretell events both near and distant; it was because they enunciated principles which

are *eternally* true; because they followed out moral sequences, and showed how a certain effect must follow a certain cause not in one age only but in every age. And the fact that prophecy is thus progressive accounts for a phenomenon which must have struck all students of Scripture. As we regard from the prophet's own standpoint the series of events predicted in one of his utterances an illusion is occasioned not unlike that produced by the foreshortening of a picture; things really widely separated appear close together, and what stands in the immediate foreground dwarfs into insignificance objects really much greater than itself. It was of course natural that the immediate event should loom larger in the prophet's mind and colour more vividly his conceptions than those which were at a distance; and yet from an impartial standpoint the first embodiment of the moral principle in question might often appear the most trivial of all.

These truths—that prophecy had immediate as well as subsequent fulfilments, that it was based upon the prophet's insight into the Divine character and his perception of moral sequences, and that it necessitates a method analogous to foreshortening are so important to the right understanding of the prophetic predictions that it will be well to give a few illustrative examples.

In our Lord's eschatological discourses (Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi.) the destruction of Jerusalem and the Day of Judgement appear to be inextricably confused—a proof, by-the-by, that these discourses were committed to writing previous to the capture of the Holy City by Titus in A.D. 70; for at a later date the writer would certainly have accurately discriminated the two events. Our Lord had said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come" (Matt. x. 23); and, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv. 34), and this led the Christians of apostolic times to believe—as we gather from the Epistles—that the final Day of Judgement was close at hand. In reality, however, these sayings alluded to the time when the "abomination of desolation" (the Roman

Standard) should be set up in the Holy Place, when Jerusalem should be "compassed with armies." That was a coming of the Son of Man: it was a Day of Judgement for the doomed city: it was a closing of the era of the Old Dispensation and a fuller inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth, for only then was the barrier between Jewish and Gentile Christians finally removed. At the same time it was the prototype of many subsequent "comings of the Son of Man," to judge guilty nations, and of that final advent to which the eschatological discourses unmistakably allude, which will be the summing up and ratification of all previous judgements. Clearly then in these prophetical utterances of our Lord we find the enunciation of a great moral principle which was to be illustrated by a series of events or crises and summed up in a final fulfilment which would exhaust the prophecy. We find also that "foreshortening" which is so characteristic of all prophecy.

Let us glance next at the earliest Messianic prediction in the Old Testament, the words spoken to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This certainly is a prophecy of Christ's victory over sin through the Atonement. But also it is the enunciation of a moral principle which has been in the course of partial fulfilment all through the ages. We may take the words in their obvious natural sense. God *has* put enmity between man and sin. Man has always instinctively felt that transgression is at the root of all his sorrow and shame, and this has led, especially in the person of the saintliest of our race, to a terrible conflict between the higher instincts and the lower in which sin has been scotched, but only at the price of a suffering fitly symbolised by the bruised heel. The victory, however, was incomplete until He came who, as Son of Man, summed up in Himself all the conflict that had gone before, and, as Son of God, crushed, through the Cross, the serpent's head.

The prophetic psalms illustrate the same principle. It is

granted on all hands that the Messianic idea—like all other religious ideas—was gradual in its development; the Messiah was conceived of in turn as King, Conqueror, Judge, and Sufferer. In the Psalms the first two of these conceptions predominate. The pressing danger was that the Chosen People should be overwhelmed by some of the great empires around them, and their mission rendered abortive, and it was therefore natural that they should picture the coming Deliverer as a warlike monarch who should protect them from their enemies. Thus prophecies which pointed to the Messiah glanced in passing at some of the most famous of the Jewish monarchs—who, in fact, were types of Great David's Greater Son—and borrowed some of their imagery from them. When in reading a Messianic psalm we come across such a passage as this, "He shall fill the places with dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries" (cx.), we shall not be shocked or perplexed if we remember that it is some prefiguring type who is spoken of, and that only when we take the more spiritual traits of the various prophecies and unite them do the lineaments of the true Messiah begin to take shape. It is impossible to read such psalms as the second, twenty-first, and above all the seventy-second, and not feel that, however truly they may have derived their colouring from the careers of actual monarchs of Judah and Israel, it is an ideal king that the writers are consciously endeavouring to depict. Similarly, in reading those psalms which describe a suffering Messiah (*e.g.* xxii. and lxix.), we must expect to find details which relate only to the intermediate types. The Messianic psalms, like all the other prophecies, had thus "springing and germinant" fulfilments; but a full correspondence is found only in the character and office of the antitype, Jesus Christ.

That the predictions found in the books more distinctly known as "prophetic" had also as a rule a primary fulfilment becomes the more apparent the more closely the subject is studied. For example, when the First Isaiah (i.–xxxix.) foretells the birth of Immanuel there can be little doubt that the promise referred primarily to the immediate future. Isaiah

had foretold (vii. 1–9) that the confederation of Syria and Israel against Judah should come to naught, and that within sixty-five years the kingdom of Israel would be overthrown. Ahaz was invited to ask a sign to confirm this prediction, and on his refusal Jehovah Himself gave a sign. "The maiden is with child, and beareth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," and it was promised that before the child was old enough to know good from evil the land ruled by Rezin and Pekah should be forsaken. The birth of a Messiah centuries later could be no sign to Israel's contemporaries, and the Jewish commentators who held that some son of Ahaz was born shortly after, and was named by his mother Immanuel, were probably right.* This is the more likely from the fact that in the very next chapter (viii.) one of Isaiah's own sons is named Spoil-swiftly Rob-quickly (Maher-shalal-hash-baz), as a sign that the king of Assyria should carry away the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria—and that before the boy should "have knowledge to cry My father, and my mother." No doubt every deliverer raised up to help Israel or Judah was in a sense an Immanuel, a proof that *God* was *with* His ancient people; but these were far from corresponding fully to the great Name; they were but imperfect types of the true Immanuel. Thus the sign given to Ahaz was not exhausted by the deliverance wrought in his day. It faintly shadowed forth the greater Deliverer given to all humanity. Similarly the description of the ideal King who was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, etc. (ix. 1–7), was no doubt prophetic in the first place of Hezekiah. But Hezekiah corresponded but partially to the wondrous description, and this is not only felt by us, it was felt by Isaiah himself, who continued long after to develop the Messianic ideal.

If there is one passage in the prophets which more than any other we are disposed to consider related solely to a distant event, it is that familiar passage in the Second Isaiah (xl.–lxvi.) which relates to the suffering Servant of Jehovah

* Another suggestion is that he was a son of Isaiah, named to be a "sign," as were his two other sons (see viii. 18).

(lii. 13–liii. 12). Yet a careful examination of the book will show that the "Servant of the Lord" is primarily Israel *ideally considered* (xli. 8; xliv. 2, 21; xlv. 4; xlviii. 20; xlix. 3, etc.). It was a cheering thought Jehovah thus sent His people that, so far as their afflictions in Babylon were due to their loyalty to Him, their sufferings were vicarious, and would ultimately help on the salvation of the world. But of course Israel ideally considered was identical with Jesus Christ; in none other was the perfection which God's discipline of Israel was meant to evolve realised, and while the Second Isaiah himself, or Jeremiah, or many another who suffered for and through the sins of others may practically have realised the prophetic conception of the "Servant of the Lord," there is only One to whom the famous passage so dear to all Christian hearts will apply in all its fulness.

The passages which have thus been examined do not form a class by themselves. They have been chosen because they are thoroughly representative of predictive prophecy as a whole; and they seem fairly to establish the fact that while each prediction had a primary and immediate application this did not exhaust its meaning, but was merely the first of a chain of fulfilments arising from the fact that the prediction was founded upon some moral principle of eternal application. If this view of prophetic prediction be true, on the one hand it is an answer to the arguments used in the works of destructive writers, such as Kuenen,* and on the other it avoids the difficulties involved in the "magical" view which makes the prophet's predictions useless and indeed unintelligible to his contemporaries, and leaves unexplained the frequent discrepancies between the words of the prophecy and the person or event to which, in this view, they are alone applicable. The theory thus set forth is, however, not adopted here because it explains away difficulties, but because it alone seems to square with the facts.

One question about the predictions of the prophets remains

* *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*, by Dr. A. KUENEN, translated from the Dutch by the Rev. Adam Milroy.

to be answered: Were they always fulfilled? The answer would appear to be in the negative. In the Book of Jonah the destruction of Nineveh was foretold by God's express command, and yet we are told "God repented Him of the evil, and did it not." In Isaiah xxix. 3 it is predicted that Jerusalem shall be closely besieged, while in Isaiah xxxvii. 33, on the intercession of Hezekiah, it was prophesied that the Assyrian army should not come near it. In Ezekiel xxxiii. 13, 14, God Himself declares that the sentence He has pronounced by a prophet shall be remitted on repentance, or the promise cancelled for subsequent transgression. The explanation is simple. If God is to reveal Himself to man at all the revelation must be anthropomorphic. What prophecy did, therefore, was to mirror accurately the attitude of God towards an individual or a nation at a particular time, and in the presence of particular circumstances. There were occasions when circumstances might change, and God's purpose might, to speak anthropomorphically, change with them. When the punishment which befitted a sin was threatened, repentance might avert it; and on the other hand, when some gracious promise had been given, the Divine message might subsequently be sent, "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good from you." It is abundantly clear, both from sacred history and prophecy, that threatenings and promises were alike conditional.

ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF ISAIAH

On perusing "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah" the reader will find a break at the end of chapter xxxv., followed by several pages of history which read like an extract from the Book of Kings. He will then, on reaching the opening words of chapter xl.—"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God"—suddenly find himself transported, without warning and without preparation, into a different land, a different atmosphere, and a different set of circumstances. As he reads

on he will be struck by this further fact, that whereas in i.–xxxix. we have a number of prophecies dealing with various topics, and not always arranged in chronological order, in the remainder of the book there is a close approach to literary unity, one theme is dealt with throughout and regularly developed, and it is plain that the whole is either the work of a single author; or, if of more than one, then the material has been skilfully selected and carefully fused by a very able editor. If the reader's critical faculty has been awake, and if he has heard at all of modern theories, he will inevitably ask himself at this point whether xl.–lxvi. can possibly be by the same hand as the earlier part of the book. The question was first asked by a learned Jew in the twelfth century, Aben Ezra; it was raised again at the end of the eighteenth century by two German students, Koppe and Döderlein; and it has been answered in the negative, with increasing emphasis and confidence, by the best critics of all schools during the nineteenth century. Such incidents as that already alluded to (p. 12 ff.), the conversion of Delitzsch, the ablest of the conservative critics, will carry more weight with the general reader than many arguments; but a brief résumé of the grounds upon which the modern conclusion rests may not be without interest. That conclusion is, that the writer of xl.–lxvi. was not Isaiah the contemporary of Ahaz and Hezekiah, whose death must have taken place some years later than 700 B.C., but an anonymous prophet who lived towards the close of the Babylonish Captivity, *circa* 550 B.C., and was the contemporary of Cyrus. It should be clearly understood that this theory does not in any way throw discredit upon the latter part of *Isaiah*, for he who wrote it was in any case one of the greatest and most inspired of the prophets. Nor does it at all seek to explain away the predictive element in his work; that is equally remarkable, whether we date it from the eighth or the sixth century B.C.

The modern theory receives its strongest support from *historical* considerations. Sufficient stress has been already laid upon the principle that the prophet always wrote from the

standpoint of his own times for the consolation or instruction primarily of his own contemporaries. But if the single authorship of *Isaiah* be maintained, we have in the latter part of the book a most extraordinary and purposeless violation of this principle. Without a word of explanation the scene shifts to Babylon. No further allusion is made to the subjects and circumstances dealt with in the first thirty-nine chapters, and for good reasons: the monarchy, it is evident, no longer exists; the Holy Land is far away, and desolated; the Temple has long been in ruins. The writer has not a word to say to Hezekiah, Ahaz, Manasseh, or their subjects; he addresses himself solely to the exiles living at the time of the conquests of Cyrus, *and he speaks as if he were one of themselves.* If Isaiah had indeed been the author of these chapters, how they would have puzzled the intervening generations! Moreover, the writer not only speaks as if he lived during the Exile, but we can discriminate the exact time in which his prophecies were written, for it is clear from the opening chapters that Cyrus had already begun his triumphal career, but that the conquest of Babylon had still to be accomplished. Of course, if the standpoint had been the eighth century B.C. these two events would have been spoken of as equally future. Only one who lived between them could write of them as this author does. That the prophet of the Restoration was indeed a dweller in Babylon is undoubtedly implied throughout his work. It is true that the local colour is not entirely Babylonish; here and there we get glimpses of the scenery of the Holy Land. But it is vain to urge this fact as though it proved the author to be a denizen of Palestine, for Ezekiel, who undoubtedly was an exile in Babylon, reflects still less of his uncongenial surroundings than did this prophet. It is quite probable that the latter may have visited his native country; he certainly loved to dwell there in imagination, and it would be surprising indeed if he never spoke of the trees and flowers and hills of the land so dear to him. But on the other hand, as Professor G. A. Smith says, "the temples of Babylon, the idol manufactories, the processions of images, the diviners and astro-

logers, the gods and altars especially cultivated by the characteristic mercantile spirit of the place, the shipping of that mart of nations, the crowds of her merchants, the glitter of many waters, and even that intolerable glare which so frequently curses the skies of Mesopotamia,"* all find their place in this prophet's writing just as naturally as do scenes and incidents of the social and political life of Judæa in the first thirty-nine chapters of *Isaiah.* It is needless, however, to elaborate the proof further. It is admitted that but for the authority of tradition, the assertion that the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were written in the days of Hezekiah would have been scouted as absurd, and the theory that it was the work of one of the exiles in the days of Cyrus would have been accepted as self-evident. Whether tradition should be allowed to outweigh the evidence which is opposed to it we shall be in a better position to judge when this brief inquiry is concluded.

In the second place, the modern theory is supported by the *results of a verbal analysis* of *Isaiah.* The words and phrases characteristic of the first writer are conspicuous by their absence in the second, and *vice versâ.* Those who wish to examine this part of the evidence minutely will find it admirably set forth—so far as it can be made plain to the English reader—in Professor Driver's *Isaiah and his Times*, pp. 194–200, of which here only a brief summary can be given. It may be premised that the first thirty-nine chapters contain, admittedly, some of the latest of Isaiah's prophecies, so that any change in his vocabulary or literary method would certainly have been mirrored within the limits of those chapters. There is, however, in this part of *Isaiah* no change; the style never varies from first to last. How comes it, then, that when we reach chapter xl. we find at once evidences of a new hand? In the First Isaiah—as we may now for convenience call the author of i.–xxxix.—there are found at least thirty-five peculiar words or expressions, nearly one-half of which are not found in any other part of the Bible; these are pretty evenly dis-

* xlix. 10, margin R.V.

tributed between the prophecies of the earlier and later date, *yet not one of them recurs in the Second Isaiah.* So again there are phrases which the first author was continually repeating; for example, "in that day," which is repeated more than twenty times by the First Isaiah, and "it shall come to pass," which the reader will find sprinkled freely throughout his pages: peculiarities such as these are not easily dropped, yet each of them occurs but twice in the later work. He who carefully weighs these facts will certainly be driven to the conclusion that the writer of the first thirty-nine chapters was not the writer of the remainder. And when we go on and examine the Second Isaiah, the result already arrived at is confirmed. Professor Driver shows that in the shorter work there are twenty characteristic words or expressions, several of which occur nowhere else in Scripture, *and not one of these occurs in the First Isaiah*, while there are many others common in the later and extremely rare in the earlier prophet. Still more convincing to the ordinary reader, perhaps, is the fact that certain tricks of manner which obtrude themselves in the later work are not to be discerned in the earlier. The Second Isaiah is fond of duplicating words for rhetorical effect, *e.g.* "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (xl. 1); "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord" (li. 9); "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence" (lii. 11); he abounds also in the double and treble affirmative: "Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root," etc. (xl. 24); "Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it," etc. (xliv. 15). Let any reader mark carefully how often these characteristic passages recur in the later work, and then search for them in the first thirty-nine chapters, and he will find it difficult indeed to believe in the identity of authorship. The champions of the older view attempt to meet this argument by pointing out verbal similarities. But they have forgotten the fact that similarities only possess evidential value when they are also *peculiarities*, and many of the passages they adduce as common to both parts of the book *are found in*

other prophets also, and therefore prove nothing. The passages which remain can be accounted for by the fact that the later prophet knew and had studied the earlier. Every prophet in this way borrowed from his predecessors, just as every English poet is indebted to previous masters of English verse.

It has been demonstrated, too, that the difference between the two works extends to the style, sublimity being the characteristic note of the one, pathos of the other. The later writer not only is distinguished from the First Isaiah by the employment of different words and phrases, but, as Professor A. B. Davidson says, by "the peculiar articulation of sentences and the movement of the whole discourse, by which an impression is produced so unlike the impression produced by the earlier portions of the book."

In the third place the Second Isaiah may be shown to be distinct from the first by the *different theological conceptions* which pervade his work. The First Isaiah conceived of the Messiah under the figure of the ideal Davidic king. He would have been startled, doubtless, if he had known that the sacred title of "God's anointed One" would have been given to a Gentile monarch such as Cyrus, even in a secondary sense (xlv. 1). And in the primary sense the Messiah in the later work is no longer a conquering king; he is disclosed under a new figure as the "Servant of the Lord," a lowly sufferer, bearing the sins of others. Again, the very content of the word righteousness is, as Professor G. A. Smith has shown, changed in the later prophecy. In the earlier work, when Israel was a nation with social and political duties to perform, "righteousness" is for the most part used in a practical sense, as a something which man has to fulfil by being just, pure, merciful, and pious; in the later work, when Israel was in exile with no power of initiative, and its duties to the existing powers were summed up in submission, "righteousness" is used as meaning something which was to come from God, and which they were to wait for patiently: it is "not the near and daily duty, it is the far-off peace and splendour of skies that have scarcely begun to redden." No

doubt the change in theological conception would not have been sufficient in itself to establish the dual authorship; but taken in conjunction with the previous proofs it adds greatly to their strength.

To these three reasons a fourth may be added. Jeremiah the prophet had much to say both of the Exile and the Restoration, but he speaks always with that reticence and reserve which is characteristic of prophecy. Is it conceivable that if he and his contemporaries already had before them Isaiah xl.–lxvi., which gave all particulars about the Exile and the Restoration, and even the name of the deliverer Cyrus, his predictions would not have been more explicit than they were? We may be quite sure that had this work been written as early as the days of Hezekiah or Manasseh, not *Jeremiah* only, but *Zephaniah* and *Habakkuk* also, would have been coloured by it.

And here it may naturally occur to the reader to ask one or two questions. First, *Did not Isaiah himself claim to be the author of the whole book that bears his name?* The answer must be in the negative. It is true *Isaiah* begins, "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz," etc., but this heading refers to the opening chapters, and is expressly limited to prophecies "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." To these were added several other collections of prophecies which do not themselves state by whom they were written; and the utmost that can be said is that there is a *presumption* that whoever placed them alongside the first chapters thought them to be by the same author. *But is there not an unbroken tradition in favour of the Isaian authorship?* In one sense there is, but on examination this comes to no more than the presumption of which we have already spoken. The translators of the Septuagint (280–150 B.C.) undoubtedly found the book as we have it, but they lived nearly five centuries later than Isaiah, and three centuries later than Cyrus, and the interval, as we know, was an uncritical one—indeed, as has been pointed out, it was a period fraught with vicissitudes which "rendered a critical estimate of sacred literature alto-

gether inconceivable." The so-called consensus which existed from that time onward to the end of the eighteenth century, really means no more than that the mistake made so many centuries earlier continued to be blindly accepted. Even so conservative a critic as the late Dean Plumptre confesses that "the faculty of historical criticism, one might almost say of intellectual discernment of the meaning and drift of a book or of individual passages in it, is, with rare exceptions, wanting in the long succession of Christian Fathers, and no one can read the Targums or the Midrash on Koheleth, or the comments of not a few of their successors, without feeling that he is in the company of those who have eyes and see not."* *But do not the writers of the New Testament frequently quote passages in chapters xl.–lxvi. as Isaiah's?* They do, but always in such a way that the value of the quotation is in no way affected whether the date of its author was the eighth or the sixth century B.C. Even one who holds the dual authorship would to-day speak of any part of the sixty-six chapters as "Isaiah," just as he would quote any part of *King Henry VIII.* as "Shakespere," although some of it was written by Fletcher. Neither Christian nor præ-Christian tradition is of such a nature as to outweigh the accumulated evidence which proves the reality of the later prophet.

Several suggestions have been made to account for the connection of the two sets of prophecies. We are doubtful to this day of the authorship of many of the books of the Bible, no name being prefixed or appended to them, and it is quite possible that the Second Isaiah wrote anonymously, especially as his prediction would have exposed him to the anger of the Babylonian oppressors: and if his name continued unknown we can easily understand how two prophets of supreme gifts such as he and Isaiah might have been classed together. Then again it has been pointed out that the Jews were accustomed for the sake of convenience and handiness to divide their sacred Scriptures into books of, roughly speaking, equal size, and thus at one time we know

* PLUMPTRE, *Ecclesiastes*, p. 22.

the Twelve Minor Prophets formed a single roll. In this way the Prophet of the Restoration may have been added to *Isaiah* to make the requisite bulk, and later the difference between them may have become obliterated. A third theory has suggested itself to the present writer as at least a possible one. Anyone who has looked into a biographical dictionary knows how frequently in English literature there have been writers of the same name with or without a slight difference in spelling—Jonson, Gray, Scott are a few examples among poets. Anyone who has examined the nomenclature of the Old Testament will be convinced that this was at least as likely to occur among Hebrew writers as among English. In point of fact, if we include its other forms, Jesaiah and Jeshaiah, the name Isaiah is used for no less than seven persons in the Old Testament, and it is more than possible that the prophet of the Restoration may have borne the same name as, and perhaps even been a descendant of, the great prophet of Hezekiah's time, and if so the confusion of their works is easily accounted for. But whatever the explanation, there can be little doubt of the fact that under the title *Isaiah* we have the works of two men of splendid prophetic gifts living in different ages, and raised up to do a different work; and until we grasp this truth there is something lacking in our understanding of the later of the two books.

THE FIRST ISAIAH

Life of Isaiah.—Little is known of the external facts of Isaiah's life. His father's name was Amoz (i. 1), and he was born during the prosperous reign of Uzziah. If we correct the chronology of *Kings* by the dates found in the Assyrian monuments, which, being contemporary, may be looked upon as indisputably correct, it would appear almost certain that Uzziah lived at least till B.C. 740, and as Isaiah's call took place in the last year of that king (vi. 1), and he must then have reached man's estate, we cannot be far wrong in supposing

that he was born between 770 and 760 B.C. His birthplace is unknown, but it is certain that his life's work was carried on at Jerusalem. From the fact that the almost contemporary prophet Amos thinks it necessary to explain that he is neither a prophet nor a prophet's son (Amos vii. 14), we may assume that Isaiah had been destined to his office in the ordinary way by being trained in the "school of the prophets," and this would account for his early Call. He was married to one who was well known as "the prophetess" (viii. 3), and she bore to him two, if not three, sons who were to be "for signs and for portents" in Israel (viii. 18). One of the sons was named A-remnant-shall-return (vii. 3), in token that Jehovah's judgements upon His people should not be final; another was named Spoil-swiftly Rob-quickly (viii. 3), as a token that Syria and Ephraim should be robbed and spoiled. By some commentators it is believed that Immanuel (vii. 14) was also a son with a symbolical name born to Isaiah; if so, of course he did but foreshadow the true God-with-us, for it could not be to this son nor to any child of Ahaz that the prophet alludes in the later passage (viii. 8), where he speaks of him as of the guardian angel of Israel. Isaiah's mission lasted through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The last great event with which his prophecies are concerned — the salvation of Jerusalem from the hostile designs of Sennacherib—may be referred without doubt to the year 701, so that Isaiah's prophecies—or those at least which are recorded in his book —cover a period of about forty years. How long the prophet survived after this date is unknown. A tradition current as early as the second century of our era asserts that he was sawn asunder during the reign of Hezekiah's successor Manasseh, and it is possible that his martyrdom is alluded to in Hebrews xi. 37, but upon this point, of course, certainty cannot be attained.

According to the editor of *Chronicles*, Isaiah wrote two works in addition to that which we possess, viz. the Acts of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) and the Vision of Isaiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 32), which latter contained an account of Hezekiah's life.

Isaiah's Times.—In order to read the prophecies of Isaiah with intelligence it is of the utmost importance that we should realise the social and political condition of Judah during his mission. Isaiah began his ministry, as we have seen, in the last year of the reign of Uzziah. Uzziah's reign appears to have lasted fifty years (791–740), and was certainly one of the most prosperous in Jewish history. He captured from the Moabites the important port Elath on the Gulf of 'Akaba (2 Kings xiv. 22, etc.), and doubtless used it for trade purposes. He defeated the Philistines and levelled their strong towns (2 Chron. xxvi. 6). He put a stop to the encroachments of the lawless Arab tribes (*v.* 7), and compelled the Ammonites to pay tribute (*v.* 8). He loved husbandry (*v.* 10), and showed his love by building watch-towers on the plains to prevent cattle-lifting, by digging cisterns, and by himself employing a number of herdmen and vine-dressers. He strengthened the defences of Jerusalem (*vv.* 9, 15) and thoroughly reorganised the army. His one rash act in endeavouring to offer incense is admitted by the Chronicler (xxvii. 2) to be the only blemish upon an otherwise righteous reign, and under his sway the country reached a condition of prosperity it had not attained since the days of Solomon. His successor Jotham seems to have followed in his steps, and either as regent (xxvi. 21) or king ruled for sixteen years prosperously and righteously, following out in every respect his father's policy (2 Chron. xxvii.). Unfortunately, the characters of these kings were not reflected in their people. "When Jeshurun waxed fat he kicked." Prosperity quickly produced luxury, the desire for luxury fostered avarice, avarice made men indifferent to the sufferings of the poor; and the moral insensibility thus produced combined with a diseased craving for novelty and excitement eventually led many to adopt or to imitate the abominable superstitions of the heathen around them. Even while the Temple worship was strictly observed, these evil tendencies began to manifest themselves towards the end of Uzziah's reign; they reached a head in the days of the weak and wicked Ahaz, and Hezekiah's righteous rule was not able

at once to abolish or subdue them, so that all through his life it was one part of Isaiah's mission to expose the national hypocrisy and to thunder against the social sins which were corrupting the rich and crushing the poor.

In the political sphere two events happened which coloured Isaiah's writings almost as deeply as the social sins which so strongly moved him; these were the alliance between Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, against Judah, and the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib's army, this last event being but the culmination of a peril which had long been threatening, the lightning-flash out of storm-clouds which had long been darkening the land. Thanks to the decipherment of contemporary Assyrian inscriptions, we are now able to understand these events, and what led up to them, as never before, and to see how exactly Isaiah's predictions were fulfilled.

The first crisis, that produced by the invasion of Rezin and Pekah, was itself an offshoot of the Assyrian peril. The Assyrian power was a growing menace to the whole earth. In the previous century it had repeatedly made its authority felt in Syria, and had compelled tribute from Jehu, king of Israel and his descendants, and in Isaiah's time its advancing boundaries threatened soon to overlap the little kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Menahem, king of Israel, purchased the aid of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser (the Pul of 2 Kings xv. 19) against domestic foes, and only retained the crown by his permission, and though his successor was dethroned by Pekah, of the anti-Assyrian faction, and a close alliance was formed with Rezin, king of Syria, it seemed more than doubtful whether the combined armies could stand against the dread power whose interference they had thus challenged. The allied monarchs endeavoured to induce Ahaz, king of Judah, to join their defensive league, and, finding persuasion fruitless, resolved to dethrone him and to put a certain anti-Assyrian, the son of Tabeel (vii. 6), in his place. When the news of this resolve reached Judah it caused the utmost panic, "The king's heart was moved, and the heart of his people as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind" (vii. 2).

It was at this juncture that Isaiah was commissioned to intervene in the name of Jehovah. He went to meet Ahaz at the conduit in the fuller's field (vii. 3), and there foretold that the league should not succeed in its designs against Judah, that before an infant should grow to know good from evil both the hostile powers should lose their kings (vii. 16), and that within sixty-five years Israel should be no more a nation (vii. 8). Ahaz, unhappily, instead of relying upon Jehovah to fulfil this promise in His own way, hired Tiglath-Pileser with an immense bribe to attack the confederates from the north. In the year 734 the Assyrian monarch invaded the northern kingdom, thus compelling the two kings to give up their design upon Judah; and the result of the campaign was that the inhabitants of north-east Israel—the people of Zebulun and Naphtali and of "Galilee of the Gentiles"—were carried away captive, an event alluded to in the well-known passage ix. 1. But the result of the disastrous policy pursued by Syria and Israel did not end here. Pekah on his return from Judah was slain, and Tiglath-Pileser raised Hoshea to the throne in his stead; Damascus, the capital of Syria, was captured in 732 B.C.; and twenty years later Samaria was taken by Sargon, and Israel was carried into captivity and ceased to be a nation.

The second crisis was the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib's army, and this and the events which led up to it are the themes of much of Isaiah's writing. Ahaz, as we have seen, submitted himself to Assyria about the year 734 B.C., and became his vassal, for this was the practical effect of the heavy bribe which he had sent to Tiglath-Pileser. After a time, however, the nation grew weary of the Assyrian yoke, and a strong party in Judah turned more and more to the other powerful nation of the East, Egypt, whose prestige was still unbroken, believing that an alliance with it on equal terms might enable them to recover their old independence. Isaiah had been strongly opposed to the pro-Assyrian policy, insisting that Judah should keep clear of all foreign entanglements and seek to merit by their faithfulness the protection of

Jehovah: but when engagements had been entered into with Assyria he opposed with the utmost vehemence the proposed alliance with Egypt, which he likened to a broken reed which would pierce the hand that leaned upon it. Throughout the rest of Hezekiah's reign a stubborn contest was carried on between Isaiah and the advocates of a pro-Egyptian policy, and again and again the prophet returns to the subject in his writings. The issue was long in doubt. It is certain from an Assyrian inscription that Judah was guilty of plotting with Egypt in 711 B.C.—though possibly Hezekiah was not privy to it—and it was the final triumph of the Egyptian party that brought about the invasion of Sennacherib in 701. And yet events completely vindicated the judgement of Isaiah, proving both the powerlessness of Egypt and demonstrating that no nation or combination of nations at that time could stem the Assyrian tide of conquest. The power of Assyria continued to grow, as is clear both from Scripture history and the contemporary inscriptions. Tiglath-Pileser died in 727, and was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV., who reigned but five years, and it was in the last year of his reign and the first of that of his successor Sargon (722) that Samaria was taken. Two years later Sargon utterly defeated the Egyptians and their allies the Philistines at Raphia, and both in his reign and that of Sennacherib his successor it was shown that the Egyptian troops were quite unable to stand before the warlike Assyrians. About the year 712 Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, sent an embassy to Hezekiah ostensibly to congratulate him upon his recovery, but really, it would seem, to ascertain whether an alliance could be concluded between them against Assyria (xxxix.), for a few years later he renounced his allegiance and declared the independence of Babylon. Sargon, however, quickly suppressed the revolt, and a second rebellion was crushed with equal ease by the next king, Sennacherib, in 703. Thus the prophet's estimate of the various powers and his wisdom in proclaiming the futility of the coveted alliance were completely vindicated. It is true when Hezekiah's surrender to the Egyptian party brought down the Assyrian

vengeance upon his country Jerusalem was saved, but in such a way as to show how well founded had been all Isaiah's warnings. Sennacherib's own account of the campaign of 701 is now in the British Museum, and may thus be summarised. First, near Ekron an innumerable army of Egyptians was put to flight; then the invasion began in earnest, and cities, fortresses, and smaller towns to the number of forty-six were levelled with the ground, and over 200,000 captives, besides spoil of all kinds, were carried away to Assyria. After this an immense fine was levied upon Jerusalem, and Hezekiah was forced to tender his submission. If all had ended here Assyria might have claimed to have triumphed completely, but suddenly—as we learn from the Book of Kings—Sennacherib changed his plans and sent a message insisting upon the unconditional surrender of the city itself. Here God interposed and saved the repentant nation from destruction—but not by means of any of those allies to which she had vainly looked: a terrible plague destroyed the proud army which had hitherto carried all before it, and Sennacherib "heard a rumour" which induced him to return at once to his own country. The prophecy which Isaiah had uttered so repeatedly, so definitely, and in such sublime language was thus marvellously fulfilled; but when we consider all the disasters which the campaign of Sennacherib inflicted on Judah we cannot but see that the judgement which the prophet pronounced upon the country if it insisted on concluding the alliance with Egypt was also duly executed. The "light from the ancient monuments" not only makes Isaiah's writings more vivid and intelligible, but it shows with what wondrous accuracy he read all the signs of his time.

The following table, founded on the Assyrian Chronology, may help to make clear the various events alluded to in *Isaiah*:

Circa 765.—Birth of Isaiah.

„ 740.—Death of Uzziah, king of Judah, who was succeeded by Jotham. Call of Isaiah.

„ 735.—Ahaz succeeds Jotham. Confederacy of Rezin and Pekah against Judah.

Circa 734–2.—Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, bribed by Ahaz, attacks the confederacy, deports the inhabitants of N.E. Israel, and takes Damascus.

„ 727.—Shalmaneser IV. succeeds Tiglath-Pileser.

„ 722.—Sargon succeeds Shalmaneser IV., and takes Samaria, bringing to an end the kingdom of Israel.

„ 720–709.—Sargon defeats the Egyptians and suppresses revolts of Philistia and Babylon.

„ 703.—Sennacherib, the successor of Sargon, suppresses a second revolt of Babylon.

„ 701.—Sennacherib defeats Egyptians and Philistines, and lays waste Judah. The Assyrian host is destroyed by pestilence, and Jerusalem saved.

Isaiah's Writings.—The themes of Isaiah's prophecies cannot be better summed up than by recalling the titles of the three children to whom in his book symbolical names are given. The name "Spoil-swiftly Rob-quickly" was not merely a reminder of the judgement which was so quickly to fall upon Syria and Israel; it was a standing warning of the punishment which would overtake every nation which persisted in a course of opposition to Jehovah, and this is a subject which continually recurs in Isaiah's work. "A-remnant-shall-return," in like manner, was a witness to the truth that God's purpose in the Chosen People would not be ultimately frustrated, and this truth also is very strikingly reflected in the prophecies, almost every vision of judgement being followed by a bright glimpse of an idealised future for God's people. Whoever the child may have been upon whom the name "God-with-us" was bestowed, he was to his contemporaries a living embodiment of that Messianic hope which is developed throughout Isaiah's writings. The three names are thus an epitome of the message which Isaiah had to deliver, not only to his contemporaries, but to all generations.

The prophecies are not always arranged in chronological order, and it is sometimes difficult to see what has determined

the present sequence. Isaiah himself may have compiled some of the collection contained in our present book, but it is evident that the final arrangement of the whole is due to an editor of much later date. It is hoped that the following brief description of the contents may help to a perception of their general trend.

Chapter i. *The Great Arraignment* is the title given to this chapter by Ewald, and no better can be found. It was either written as a preface for the work, or else is placed at the beginning because its character happens to suit it for that position. From verse 7 it is clear it was written at a time when Judah was suffering from an invasion, and this must have been either at the end of the reign of Jotham (2 Kings xv. 37) or during the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib, in the reign of Hezekiah. As usual, the threats of judgement are relieved by the promise of ultimate salvation (*vv.* 25–7).

Chapters ii.–v. *Denunciation of National Sins.*—The section is headed, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem," and then begin three verses which occur also in the prophet Micah (Micah iv. 1–3), and are probably a quotation from some older prophet. The specific sins denounced are idolatry (ii. 8–20, etc.), luxury (ii. 7), oppression of the poor (iii. 14, 15), the ruthless acquisition of large estates, in violation both of the letter and spirit of the Mosaic Law (v. 8–10), drunkenness (v. 11, 12, 22), legal injustice (v. 23), and the pride and vanity of the women (iii. 16–iv. 1). Here again promises alternate with threats, and the doctrine of the "Remnant" is strongly insisted on (ii. 2–4; iv. 2–6). It is evident that these prophecies were written when a weak king occupied the throne: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them" (iii. 12). So that they belong probably to the reign of Ahaz.

Chapter vi. *Isaiah's Call* in the last year of King Uzziah.—The "Remnant" doctrine appears in verse 13. A modern editor would have placed this vision at the beginning of the book. It is not obvious why it occupies its present position.

Chapters vii. 1–x. 4. *The League of Syria and Israel against*

Judah.—The prophet foretells the speedy humiliation of the two kings who were plotting against the House of David: they shall be overwhelmed by the Assyrians, whose invasion shall overflow Judah also (viii. 8). He gives two signs: Immanuel (vii. 14–16) and Spoil-swiftly Rob-quickly (viii. 1–4). In a prophecy written somewhat later than the rest of the section he foretells the future ideal glory of the regions recently depopulated by Tiglath-Pileser (ix. 1–5), and this leads him to the well-known passage, "Unto us a Son is born," etc., in which he looks forward to the glorious Messiah whose kingdom shall know no end (ix. 6, 7). As regards vii. 17 ff., in which Isaiah predicts a time when Assyria and Egypt between them shall desolate the land, this points to the time of Sennacherib, when, as we now know from an Assyrian inscription, a decisive conflict took place between Egypt and Assyria at Atakû, near Ekron, which was followed by the invasion so disastrous to Judah. The section closes with four stanzas (ix. 8–x. 4), each concluding, "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still," descriptive of the judgement about to fall upon Israel. The prophecies (vii. 1–x. 4) were all written before the overthrow of the confederacy of Rezin and Pekah against Judah (735 B.C.), except ix. 1–7, which must have been written a few years later.

Chapters x. 5–xii. 6. *The Assyrian Rod prepares the way for the Messianic Reign.*—This prophecy must have been written just before the invasion of Sennacherib (701). Assyria is but the rod of God's anger; when it has done its work it shall be broken and destroyed (x. 5–19). The doctrine of the Remnant is heard again (20–3). The approach of the Assyrian forces is graphically described (28–32), and their destruction as they "shake the hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion" is predicted (32–4). As he meditates upon the deliverance thus wrought the prophet's eyes glance forward in vision to the Golden Age of the Messiah (xi., xii.).

Chapters xiii.–xxiii. *The Doom of Nations.*—This section treats of the destiny of the various nations with which Israel was brought in contact.

On Babylon (xiii. 1–xiv. 23).—A magnificent pæan of triumph over the coming destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. Though introduced by the editor with the words, "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw," it plainly belongs to the time of the Second Isaiah. It would have been meaningless to the contemporaries of Isaiah.

On Assyria (xiv. 24–7; xvii. 12–14). — Two brief prophecies, written shortly before Sennacherib's invasion in 701.

On Palestina, i.e. Philistia (xiv. 28–32).—The rejoicing of Philistia at the fall of him that smote her (*i.e.* death of Ahaz? Sargon?) is premature. The Assyrians are approaching (*v.* 31) and shall waste Philistia, while Judah shall dwell safe. The prophecy was fulfilled by Sennacherib, who, as we know from his own inscription, wasted both Ekron and Askelon.

On Moab (xv. and xvi.).—When xvi. 13, 14 was added, clearly the prophecy was an old one; but whether originally uttered by Isaiah himself or some earlier prophet we are not told. A terrible calamity has overtaken Moab, and the prophet's heart is moved for her. Her remnant are invited to take refuge with Judah, but her proverbial pride (xvi. 6) prevents. A Messianic prophecy is contained in xvi. 4, 5. The date of this section is uncertain. Moab may have been wasted by Tiglath-Pileser, who certainly took tribute of it, or by Sargon; but no evidence of this has been discovered as yet.

On Damascus (xvii. 1–11).—Written before the Syro-Israelitish War, which led to the capture of Damascus by Tiglath-Pileser in 732.

On Ethiopia (xviii.).—Ethiopia fears that Assyria will soon march against her, and she sends messages to summon aid. Go back, says the prophet, and say that Jehovah will fight against the Assyrians. Written probably when Sennacherib's invasion was impending.

On Egypt (xix.).—Foretells the decline of Egypt's power. This began to be immediately fulfilled. Egypt was repeatedly defeated by Sargon, by Sennacherib, and by Esarhaddon, and

was made a province of Assyria in 674. The prophet looks forward to the time when Judah, Assyria, and Egypt shall worship the one true God.

Second Prophecy on Egypt (xx.).—This was written during the siege of Ashdod, and the date is fixed by Sargon's inscription as 711.

On Babylon (xxi. 1–10).—The prophet, *who is in sympathy with Babylon* (*v.* 3), announces its capture by a foreign foe. We gather from Isaiah xxxix. that there was friendship if not secret alliance between Hezekiah and Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon. The overthrow of Merodach-Baladan and the capture of Babylon in 710, therefore, could not but have been unwelcome news to Jewish patriots, and if this was the occasion of the prophecy, its peculiar tone is at once accounted for. Others refer it to the capture of Babylon by Cyrus a century and a half later, but that could have been only an occasion of rejoicing to any Jewish prophet.

On Dumah, Edom (xxi. 11, 12).—An ambiguous prophecy of good and evil for Edom.

On Arab Tribes (xxi. 13–17).—The Dedanites take refuge from their foes in the desert, and are succoured by the tribes of Tema. But soon all the tribes of Kedar (*i.e.* the Arab tribes) shall feel the weight of the oppressor's hand. The foe spoken of is doubtless the Assyrians, who were probably at the time of this prediction engaged in one of their campaigns against the Philistines (711 and 701 B.C.).

On Jerusalem's levity and panic (xxii. 1–14).—A siege is threatened; some of the people drown their fears in sensual enjoyments, others make hasty preparations for defence; none turn in penitence to Jehovah. The prophet is overwhelmed with shame, and declares that Jehovah will never overlook this. The prophecy belongs probably to 711, when Sargon's troops were besieging Ashdod, and Judah had been accused of plotting with Egypt.

[*On Shebna* (xxii. 15–25).—Shebna, an influential minister in Jerusalem (treasurer and "over the household"), had abused his office, and is threatened by the prophet with banishment

and disgrace, while the righteous Eliakim is nominated his successor. In 701 Eliakim appears to have held the office here promised him (xxxvi. 3).]

On Tyre (xxiii.).—In graphic language the overthrow of Tyre, the London of antiquity, is foretold. From the thirteenth verse, which speaks of the overthrow of the Chaldæans, it is evident that the prophecy must be later than the capture of Babylon by Sargon in 710. It is possible, however, that the reference is to the later siege, in 703.

Chapters xxiv.–xxvii. *A Supplement to the "Doom of Nations."*—This prophecy, which is generally regarded as single and continuous, is one of the most magnificent in the whole Bible, and also one of the most difficult to interpret. On the one hand it predicts a terrible judgement—which in some passages is regarded as affecting the whole earth (xxiv. 1–14, 17, 21; xxvi. 21), and elsewhere is pictured under the image of the overthrow of some mighty city (xxv. 1–3; xxvi. 5 and 6; xxvii. 10, 11); on the other hand it resounds with songs of deliverance from the redeemed of the Lord in all quarters of the earth (xxiv. 14, 15, 16; xxv. 1–5; xxvi. 1 ff.). It is, moreover, very rich and varied in its teaching, not only containing one of the most explicit intimations in the Old Testament of a future resurrection (xxvi. 19), but very clearly foretelling the blessing which the mission of Israel was to bring to all mankind (xxvii. 6). The details of the prophecy do not fit the conditions either of exilic, or præ- or post-exilic times, the imagery being rather *drawn from all three*. Probably, therefore, we are not meant to take either the allusions to the reign on Mount Zion or to the destruction of the "city of terrible nations" as literal and historical; rather we may believe that the prophet—drawing his images from all the experiences of his people—seeks to produce a picture of universal judgement and redemption. It is, in fact, "the doom of nations" over again, but this time cast into a more idealistic form, and focussed into a last great day of judgement. Many modern critics are of opinion that this prophecy is not Isaiah's, but their arguments are not conclusive. It is admitted that

the style resembles his, and that the prophecy develops his lines of thought; and if some other prophet wrote it, it was perhaps from the first intended as a supplement to Isaiah's prophecies on foreign nations (xiii.–xxiii.),* and is in any case fitly placed in its present position.

In xxvii. 1 the "swift serpent" is probably Assyria (or the swift Tigris), the "crooked serpent" Babylon (or the winding Euphrates), and the "dragon that is in the sea" Egypt (G. A. Smith); but these empires are alluded to symbolically as representatives of world-empires that have set themselves against God's purposes.

Chapters xxviii.–xxxiii. *The Danger from Assyria.*

xxviii. The prophet foretells the fall of Samaria (1–4), which duly took place in 722. As is his custom, after foretelling judgement he introduces the doctrine of the Remnant (5, 6). He denounces the sins of Judah, and foretells their chastisement through the Assyrians (11). Neither by their alliance with Egypt nor in any other way shall they escape the "overflowing scourge" (14–22). Verses 23–9 are a parable founded on agricultural pursuits, showing that when God's judgements have produced their effect they will cease, and they will be in every case proportionate to the offence.

xxix. Under the title of "Ariel" he addresses Jerusalem, and foretells the advent of the avenging Assyrians within a year, etc. (1–17). His thought dwells upon the purification of Judah this will bring about, and he glances forward at the ideal future (17–24).

xxx. Isaiah scathes with divine sarcasm the embassy that had started to seek the help of Egypt against the Assyrians (1–18). In a passage of great beauty he foretells the moral reformation that will follow Judah's punishment, and predicts the ultimate destruction of Assyria (18–33).

xxxi. The prophet again denounces those who had gone to Egypt to solicit the aid of Egyptian cavalry (1–3). He again foretells that God will deliver Jerusalem at the last

* See DRIVER'S *Introduction*, p. 211.

moment from the Assyrians (4–9), and bids Judah turn to Him for help (6).

xxxii. Isaiah describes the Messianic king, etc. (1–8). He chides the luxury-loving ladies of Jerusalem, and warns them that a time of discipline is at hand (9–15). He pictures the reformed society that shall follow the judgement (15–20).

xxxiii. Written when the Assyrians were almost at the gates of Jerusalem, having already desolated all the country. The prophet draws a graphic picture of the condition of the ravaged land (7–9), but awaits with absolute confidence the interposition of Jehovah on His people's behalf. The guilty in Jerusalem are seized with terror (14), but the righteous are calm, knowing that God rules and all is well (14 ff.). In the coming deliverance he glances on to the golden age of the Messiah (20–4).

Chapters xxxiv., xxxv.—*Judah and Edom.*—It is probable that the prophecies in these chapters are not Isaiah's, but belong to the Exile. When Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians in 588 the Edomites rejoiced at their calamity; their cry was, "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). This aroused deep resentment among the Jews, as we see from Lamentations iv. 21, 22; Obadiah, *vv.* 10–16; Ezekiel xxxv. 15; and Amos i. 11, 12. As we read in xxxiv. of "the year of recompense in Edom's controversy with Zion" (*v.* 8), and of the terrible punishment then imminent upon that country, we cannot but see that the writer is referring back to the prophecies just quoted, and that he writes not in Isaiah's time but subsequent to 588. It is equally clear that in xxxv. a prophet of the Exile foretells the joyful return from captivity, and it is probable that both chapters are the work of the same prophet, and that his intention is to contrast the happy deliverance of Judah with the tragic fate of the reviler Edom.

When or under what exact circumstances the prophecy about Edom was fulfilled we do not know, but in the days of Malachi (*circa* 440 B.C.), Edom's "mountains were a desolation," and his heritage given to "jackals of the wilderness" (Mal. i. 4).

Chapters xxxvi.–xxxix. *Historical.*—These chapters are taken, with slight alterations, from the Second Book of Kings (xviii.–xx.), with the addition of Hezekiah's pathetic poem on his fear of death.

xxxvi. Rabshakeh's mission, etc.

xxxvii. Hezekiah sends to ask Isaiah's prayers and is comforted by a message. Second Assyrian mission. Hezekiah's prayer and Jehovah's answer. Destruction of Assyrians.

xxxviii. Hezekiah's sickness, and his writing upon it.

xxxix. The embassage from Merodach - Baladan, and Isaiah's prophecy of a future captivity in Babylon.

It must be noted that these historical chapters are not in chronological order. Rabshakeh's mission, etc., was in 701 B.C.; Hezekiah's sickness and Merodach-Baladan's embassy must have been previous to 710, when the latter was defeated by Sargon and ceased to be king.

The chapters in Isaiah have been analysed with greater fulness than will be possible in the prophets that remain to be treated, but they will perhaps serve to show the reader that, even in details, the prophet keeps in close relation to the social and political events of his own age. What is true of Isaiah is equally true of the other prophets.

THE SECOND ISAIAH

Isaiah to Second Isaiah.—For the right understanding of xl.–lxvi. it will be necessary to glance back at the history which intervened between the close of Isaiah's ministry and the appearance of the Prophet of the Restoration. Isaiah disappears from our view in the year of the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in 701, towards the close of the reign of the good King Hezekiah. Manasseh ascended the throne *circa* 697, and during his long reign of fifty-five years the reformation accomplished by his father was completely undone, idolatry was practised even in the Temple itself, and Judah sank to a depth of moral degradation perhaps never

before exceeded. During the short reign of his son and successor Amon (641–639 ?) the condition of Judah, as we may judge from the writings of Zephaniah, underwent no improvement, and though the next king, Josiah (639–609), in whose reign Deuteronomy was rediscovered (621), succeeded in bringing the nation back to at least nominal allegiance to Jehovah, we know on the authority of Jeremiah (iii. 10) that the reformation was, so far as the bulk of the nation was concerned, rather formal than spiritual. During the brief reign of Jehoahaz (otherwise Shallum), Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin the corruption and decay continued, and the nation became fully ripe for the calamity which Isaiah had foretold (Isa. xxxix. 5–8) in a prophecy which fitly precedes the opening words of the Second Isaiah in chapter xl.

Meanwhile changes had taken place in the fortunes of those world-empires with whose destinies the fate of Judah was so inextricably entangled. In Isaiah's time Assyria, under its great kings Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, was the dominant power, against which the intrigues of Eygpt and the rebellion of Babylon were alike impotent. But during the seventh century B.C. all was changed. In 607 Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes with the assistance of the Babylonians under Nabopolassar, thus fulfilling the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah uttered more than a century before (Isa. x. 5–19). Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, became, after he had defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish (604), the most powerful monarch of his time. He reduced Jehoiakim to vassalage (*circa* 603), and on the rebellion of his successor, Jehoiachin, took Jerusalem, deporting the king and the flower of the nation to Babylon in 597. Eleven years later, when Zedekiah revolted, he again besieged Jerusalem. The city was razed, the Temple burnt, the sacred vessels taken away, and a host of the more capable inhabitants went into exile, only a sparse population of peasants being left to till the soil.

The Period of Exile.—The Jews remained in captivity

under Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Neriglissar, and the usurper Nabonahid (Nabonidus). Jeremiah had foretold that the Jews should "serve" the Babylonians seventy years (Jer. xxv. 11), using the figures probably in a loose sense, speaking, as we should say nowadays, in "round numbers." The actual time which elapsed between the battle of Carchemish, which made Nebuchadnezzar supreme, and the edict which permitted the Jews to return to their own land was sixty-six years, of which fifty-nine were spent in exile. The Jews appear not to have been dispersed through the country, but to have been placed *en masse* in the neighbourhood of Babylon. Probably the earlier captives were better treated than the later, but on the whole the Jews fared in Babylon much as they have done in every land in which their lot has been cast. The poorer members were probably put to slavish work in carrying out the gigantic building schemes of Nebuchadnezzar; they answered to the prophet's description, "This is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses." But, on the other hand, it seems certain that many of the better class were allowed to trade freely, and amassed considerable wealth, while a few, as we may conclude from *Daniel*, rose to high office in the State. The period of exile was emphatically a period of great literary activity, which proves that it was for many of the captives a time of leisure and of comparative prosperity. Some form of Home Rule seems to have been granted to the exiles, the "elders of Judah" were still a distinct class (Ezek. viii. 1, etc.), the priests still existed as a cult (Jer. xxix. 1), and though sacrifice was impossible, they doubtless exercised such religious functions as were compatible with the conditions of the people. The nation as a whole followed doubtless the advice of Jeremiah, "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply ye there, and be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of

the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. xxix. 5, 6, 7). It is certain from passages both in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah that their old idolatrous practices still lingered among some of the Jews, and that to these were added some of the superstitions of their conquerors; but on the whole no doubt the nation was disciplined by its sojourn in Babylon, and acquired during these years that invincible attachment to monotheism which seems never to have faltered after they were restored again to their own land.

Meanwhile about the middle of the sixth century B.C. the great conqueror who was destined by God to be the deliverer of the Jews appears upon the stage of history. Cyrus, a scion of the royal house of Persia, was originally an Elamite prince whose territory was at the head of the Persian Gulf. Having united under himself the Persian tribes, he overthrew in 549 the Median Empire, conquered Crœsus the wealthy king of Lydia, subjugated Asia Minor, and then began a further career of conquest which brought him nearer and nearer to Babylon, with which it was evident the final duel for world-empire would have to be fought. It was at this crisis, when the eyes of all the world were fixed upon Cyrus, that the Second Isaiah uttered his message of consolation. A verse in his writings enables us to fix almost the exact year when they were written. In Isaiah xli. 25 the conqueror's invasion is spoken of as from the east (*i.e.* Persia) and from the north (*i.e.* Media), so that the amalgamation of the Medes and Persians must already have been an accomplished fact. This amalgamation took place, as we have seen, in 549, and as Babylon was conquered in 538 it must have been between those years that *Isaiah* xl.–lxvi. was written (Driver).

If the reader bears in mind the various facts thus recalled —the condition of the captives, the strained expectancy of the Jews now that the time of their deliverance, as predicted by Jeremiah, was approaching, the appearance of Cyrus, and his uninterrupted career of conquest—he will be able to follow without difficulty the remarkable prophecy of which the key

note is struck so clearly in the opening verses: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sin."

The following dates bring the salient facts before us:—

597.—First siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiachin and many Jews carried into exile to Babylon.

586.—Second siege. Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and Zedekiah and the remainder of the Jews carried captive.

549.—Cyrus conquers the Median Empire.

538.—Cyrus captures Babylon, and allows the Jews under Zerubbabel to return to their own land.

It is a testimony to the homogeneousness of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. that commentators cannot agree as to the way in which the prophecy should be divided. The break is perhaps oftenest made after chapters xlviii. and lvii., but it is difficult to see what advantage this division possesses beyond making the first two sections end each with the same words, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." The division adopted in this book serves best, it is believed, to bring out the chief *motifs* of the prophecy.

Chapters xl.–liv. *The Coming Deliverance.*—This section may be described as a cord woven of strands of different colours; for it contains several themes, which are taken up in succession and recur again and again, all of which contribute to the main thought. One theme is that of the appointed Deliverer. At first he is described anonymously, merely as one raised up from the East (xli. 2), but further on he is mentioned by name as Cyrus, and described as God's shepherd (xliv. 28), the anointed one (xlv. 1), the man of God's counsel (xlvi. 11), and as him whom Jehovah hath loved (xlviii. 14). The prophet returns no less than six times to the subject within the limits of this section, always adding some new touch to the description (*supra* and xlv. 1–5, 14; xlvi. 11).

Another favourite theme is the *way* by which the redeemed shall return to Zion, in the picturing of which the prophet seems to make use of all the bright colours which the palette of the imagination can furnish (xl. 3, 4; xli. 18–20; xlii. 15–17; xliii. 1, 2, 19, 20; xlviii. 20, 21). He loves to dwell, too, upon the greatness of God, the *Saviour of Israel;* and the sublime passages in which he sets forth God's omnipotence are generally neighboured by a description of the impotent idols upon whom he exhausts all his powers of sarcasm and irony (xl. 19, 20; xli. 6, 7, 23, 24, 29; xliv. 9–20; xlvi. 1, 2, 5–7, etc.). Interspersed among these are passages which speak of the *Redeemed Nation.* With one of the tenderest of these the prophecy opens (xl. 1–11). The prophet grasps, as it had never been grasped before, the truth that his people had a mission, that Israel was Jehovah's servant, and was to be made the instrument of salvation to the whole world (xlii. 1–4; xlix. 6, 8; li. 4, 5, etc.). Nevertheless he does not confuse the real with the ideal; as yet the servant was deaf and blind (xlii. 18–20); he had "made God to serve with his sins," and had "wearied God with his iniquities," and it was not for any merit in him that the redemption was to be wrought. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgression for Mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins" (xliii. 25, 26). "I knew that thou didst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For My name's sake will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For Mine own sake, for Mine own sake will I do it" (xlviii. 8–10). Yet in spite of the shortcomings of the actual nation the figure of the ideal Israel, the true servant of God, continues to grow upon the prophet's vision, and in the famous passage lii. 13 to liii. 12 we have that picture which by common consent prefigures none other than the true Messiah, the Sacrifice for the world's sin. There is in this section one deep note of judgement, the terrible ode on doomed Babylon (xlvii.); but its closing chapters abound

with many tender messages of comfort, many jubilant contrasts between Israel's past sufferings and the joys in store for the nation (*e.g.* xlix., li., lii. 1–12, liv.). So the coloured strands of the cord are twisted; so the pattern recurs, ever with slight variations; yet when we study the completed work we find unity amid diversity; the fifteen chapters have really but one theme—the coming deliverance.

Chapters lv.–lix. *Moral Preparation for Deliverance.*—When we reach the fifty-fifth chapter the subject changes. We have no more sarcastic allusions to the idols, no more glowing accounts of Cyrus, no more recurrent pictures of the ideal path to Zion, nor any allusion to the Servant of Jehovah. The deliverance is at hand, but there must be a moral preparation if it is to prove a blessing to the nation and the world. And so now the prophet's commission is not "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (xl. 1), but "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto My people their transgression, and to the house of Israel their sins" (lviii. 1). He is back from the ideal to the actual; from the perfect Servant to the sinful nation. God's message is, "Keep judgement, and do righteousness: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness is to be revealed" (lvi. 1). The prophet bids the people leave their trafficking and money-making, and buy from God the living waters "without money and without price." He denounces in stern language the many sins of the people—Sabbath-breaking (lvi. 1–8), idolatry (lvii. 3–11), the hypocrisy which led them to keep the fasts with every outward sign of mourning while they oppressed the weak and wronged the poor (lviii. 1–7), the greed, drunkenness, and neglect of duty of the national leaders. After a terrible summary of these many iniquities (lix. 1–9) the prophet insensibly glides into a humble and pathetic confession of sin on behalf of his people, and the section closes with God's assurance that for His own sake the promised deliverance shall be accomplished (*vv.* 16, 17). The last verse is a remarkable declaration that the revelation made through the prophet should henceforth never suffer eclipse in the world:

"As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (lix. 21).

Chapters lx.–lxvi. *The Glory that shall be Revealed.*—Having announced the coming deliverance, and emphasised the need for moral preparation, the prophet concludes his work with pictures still more vivid of the ideal glories that await restored Israel. Of course the immediate event fell far short of the prediction: after the manner of all the prophets, the Second Isaiah glances off from the near future to the great events which it prefigured; his glowing pictures delineate not merely the Messiah's Age, but the time when the Messiah's work shall have issued in the full redemption of human society. The section, however, is not one uninterrupted pæan; the prophet pauses at times to discriminate between the righteous and the wicked, and to warn the latter that the blessings of which he speaks are not for them. He predicts also the vengeance of God upon all the nations that oppose Him. But the jubilant note predominates, and is to be found in all the chapters of this last section. This much being premised, only one or two passages require to be noted.

In chapter lxi. 1–8 the speaker is the ideal Servant, that is, the Messiah, and the opening verses our Lord expressly applied to Himself. In chapter lxiii., the well-known passage beginning "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" we have a dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah, in which Jehovah describes His victory over all the hostile nations gathered together in Edom, the country of Israel's inveterate enemies. It had become clear that even after all the discipline of the Exile no salvation was to be looked for from the actual Israel, and so the prophet puts into Jehovah's mouth here, as elsewhere (xliii. 24, 25; xlviii. 8–10), the proclamation that He is the Saviour, not because of their righteousness, but in spite of their sins: "I

have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was no man with Me . . . Mine own arm brought salvation to Me." The language of this dialogue is plainly ideal; the prophet is consciously using symbols: it is not of earthly battlefields, but of spiritual victory, that he is thinking, and we are therefore justified in regarding this passage—as the Church has always regarded it—as symbolical of Christ's victory over sin in the Atonement. In chapter lxiii. 7 ff. we have a psalm, partly of praise, partly of entreaty, which the prophet places in the mouth of the more pious members of the nation; while in lxv. we have God's reply, in a mingled strain of sternness and tenderness, according as it is addressed to those that "prepare a table for Fate and furnish a drink-offering for Destiny," or to the loyal worshippers of Jehovah. The last chapter (lxvi.) warns the returning exiles against trusting to the ritual of worship in the restored Temple at Jerusalem, instead of to holiness and obedience. It contrasts the happiness in store for the loyal Jews with the miserable fate that awaited the idolatrous section of them, and it concludes with a remarkable prophecy that Jerusalem shall become the focus of world-wide religion. There is some dispute as to the exact meaning of verse 21, some understanding it to mean that those who are to be "made priests and Levites" are the Jews of the Dispersion, and others that they are the Gentiles. In view of lvi. 7 the latter seems the more likely supposition. There can be at least no doubt that the universality of the religion of Jehovah is here prophesied, and that much of the chapter, and indeed much of the whole prophecy, is summed up in verse 23: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." The last verse is a vivid picture of the unburied corpses of the Lord's enemies outside Jerusalem, and men going out from the city to gaze upon them with horror. Some literalists take this to mean the slaughter of the Gentile enemies of the Jews. In reality the verse is highly figurative, and signifies the ultimate destruction of those who obstinately

rebel against God, whether Jews or Gentiles. That Jews are included is apparent from verse 17 (compare verse 3).

Note.—While it is generally conceded that xl.–lxvi. forms a coherent whole, some are inclined to believe that the apparent unity is due to the skill of an editor, and that præ-exilic and post-exilic passages are incorporated with the original work of the Second Isaiah. The difference of opinion among critics as to what these passages are suffices alone to discredit this theory. The passage which, to the casual reader, seems most to bear the impress of præ-exilic times, is lvi. 9–lvii. 11, especially lvii. 9, which seems to speak of sending ambassadors to a king, just as in the time of the First Isaiah the nation was rebuked for sending ambassadors to Egypt. The "king" here, however, may be Baal, who is called "the king" in Phœnician inscriptions, just as his consort Asherah is called queen in Jeremiah vii. 18, etc.; and the ambassadors sent afar off may be messengers to renowned foreign shrines (Cheyne).

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah's Times.—The historical background of Jeremiah's life has already been partially sketched in the description of the interval between the First and Second Isaiahs, but it will here be necessary to fill in a part of this outline in rather more detail.

The long and wicked reign of *Manasseh* had ended before Jeremiah's ministry began, but its evil effects long continued to be felt, and even towards the end of the reign of Jehoiakim, some forty years after Manasseh's death, we find Jehovah uttering this threat through the prophet, "I will cause them" (the people of Judah) "to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem" (xv. 4). The short reign of his successor, *Amon*, witnessed no improvement in the religious condition of the nation, but the next king, *Josiah* (639–609), "turned to the Lord with all his

heart and all his soul" (2 Kings xxiii. 25). In the eighteenth year of his reign (621) an event of the utmost importance took place, viz. the discovery of the lost Book of the Law in the Temple by Hilkiah the priest. It was upon this discovery that Josiah's reformation was largely based, and it was part of the prophet's mission to proclaim the words of the Covenant which the Lord contained "in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem" (xi. 6). Josiah's foreign policy was moulded by the teaching of Jeremiah; he resisted the influence of those who were in favour of a league with Egypt—a party as powerful and as mischievous in Jeremiah's days as in those of the First Isaiah—and regarded the Babylonian king as the "servant of Jehovah," to oppose whom would not only be a mad policy, but disobedient to the immediate commands of God, who for a certain set period had made Babylon the instrument for carrying out His designs. In every respect Josiah seems to have been, like David, a man after God's own heart; but the moral condition of his country was by this time past remedy; the reformation was only on the surface; Judah had not turned to the Lord with her whole heart, but "feignedly" (iii. 10); and the wound of the daughter of Judah was healed but "slightly" (vi. 14), so that judgement was but delayed, not averted. In the year 609 Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, set out to engage in that struggle for world-empire with Babylon which was now seen to be inevitable, and Josiah, true to the alliance with Babylon which he had formed under the prophet's influence, threw himself in the way of the Egyptian army, but only to meet with defeat and death at Megiddo. This catastrophe must have been a great personal grief to Jeremiah; it must also have been a discouragement to the many who expected righteousness to be synonymous with earthly success, and must have greatly strengthened the hands of the Egyptian party. Pharaoh Necho deposed the rightful heir, Jehoahaz, who held the same views as Josiah, and placed his younger brother, Jehoiakim, on the throne. But the triumph of the Egyptian party was short-lived. In 604 Pharaoh Necho

was defeated by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar at the important battle of Carchemish, and Nebuchadnezzar then invaded Judah, captured Jerusalem, and after putting indignities upon Jehoiakim, only permitted him to occupy the throne on his swearing a solemn oath of allegiance. It is evident that the king was not only a traitor to his suzerain, but a cruel tyrant to his own people. It is of him that the prophet speaks in the words, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work" (xxii. 13). He contrasts his miserable reign with the prosperous times of his father the good Josiah, and declares, "Thine eyes and thine heart are but for covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it" (*v.* 17). It is not surprising, therefore, that Jehoiakim met with the usual fate of tyrants. When the Babylonian army at length approached Jerusalem to punish his rebellion the king fell by the hands of his own subjects, and his body was cast out upon the open ground outside Jerusalem, and left a prey to dogs and vultures. His son, Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, was carried away with the queen mother Nehushta into Babylon, where for nearly forty years he was kept in prison. Thus in the year 599 the captivity of Judah, which was to be consummated eleven years later, was commenced, for with Jehoiachin the princes and all the chief people of the land, the flower of the nation, were deported to Babylon. It is these captives of whom Jeremiah speaks as "good figs," as contrasted with the "naughty figs, which could not be eaten they were so bad," which fitly described those who were still left in the land. King Zedekiah, who was set up by Nebuchadnezzar in place of Jehoiachin to rule over this remnant, was the third of Josiah's sons to occupy the throne. He was a weak though well-meaning monarch, and seems to have been by turns under the influence of the partisans of Egypt and of those who advised fealty to Babylon. At length, however, the former faction prevailed. In his eighth year Zedekiah con-

cluded an alliance with Egypt, and brought about a second invasion of his country by the Chaldæans. Towards the end of Zedekiah's ninth year Jerusalem was invested, and after a long and cruel siege it was taken, the king was blinded, and he and all his subjects but the lowest of the people followed their brethren into exile.

Jeremiah's Life.—Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth, which is a city in the territory of Benjamin, a few miles north of Jerusalem. He was born probably in the closing years of the reign of Manasseh, when Judah was almost wholly given over to idolatry. His Call took place in the year 626, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah; and as he describes himself hyperbolically as a "child," we may suppose him to have been a very young man at this time (chap. i.). He had exercised the prophetic office for at least forty years when we lose sight of him in Egypt, some time after the year 588. During the good and prosperous reign of Josiah the prophet's lot was not so dark as it afterwards became. When, however, Josiah fell at Megiddo—fell, as the partisans of Egypt would say, through acting upon the advice of Jeremiah—the prophet entered upon years of living martyrdom such as few have been called upon to endure. The cries of poignant suffering which sound so piercingly through his writings are easily understood when we recall the circumstances. Jeremiah was intensely sensitive, and was passionately attached to his country, and yet not only had he all his life long to denounce his people's sins and foretell the ruin that awaited them, but the mission entrusted to him made him appear unpatriotic and even traitorous. By God's command he denounced the foreign alliances which promised to save Judah from the all-conquering Babylonians; he described Nebuchadnezzar as God's servant (xxv. 9; xxvii. 6; xliii. 10); and he foretold the victory of the enemy both by word and by acted prophecy, as when he dashed the earthen vessel to pieces in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (xix. 10–13), and appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with bonds and yokes upon his neck

(xxvii. 2). He taught that it was the nation's duty to submit patiently to their conqueror till God's purposes were accomplished; and wrote to those who were carried away on the first deportation, bidding them seek the peace of Babylon and pray to the Lord for it (xxix. 7); and even during the final siege he bade men go forth to the Chaldæans and give themselves up (xxi. 8 ff.), since nothing could avert the fate of Jerusalem, and salvation was to come not through the city, but through the remnant who should escape from her. We can well understand the furious indignation which all this would awaken, and the cry which the consequent hatred of his countrymen wrung from him: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have not lent on usury, neither have men lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me" (xv. 10). Often he appeals passionately to God to change His purpose; often he expostulates against being made the herald of such terrible tidings and the bearer of such hateful messages, and the loneliness and misery he endured even led him to borrow the language of Job to curse bitterly the day of his birth (xx. 14–18). Yet through it all Jeremiah's obedience to the different commands of Jehovah remains perfect. The Divine promise given him at his Call was fulfilled: "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. They shall fight against thee, but they shall not pravail." Alike in his emotional temperament, in his inflexible will, and in the apparently unpatriotic nature of his mission, Jeremiah resembles Paul, and though undoubtedly inferior to the great Apostle in gifts, he is his equal in his absolute devotion to the work God had given him to do.

As disasters thickened about the doomed nation, Jeremiah's peril increased. He had no doubt been often exposed to violence before: on one occasion a plot had been formed by his fellow-citizens of Anathoth to put him to death (xi. 21); on another occasion he had been scourged and put in the

stocks by Pashur the priest (xx. 2); in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign he was arrested and tried for his life for prophesying against the city (xxvi.). But now that his predictions were on the point of fulfilment, a still more determined attempt was made to secure his destruction. When the Chaldæan siege was temporarily raised by the rumoured approach of an Egyptian army, Jeremiah attempted to return to his own city, whereupon he was seized and thrown into prison on a charge of treason and desertion to the enemy (xxxvii. 12 ff.). At first he was subjected to comparatively light confinement, but later the Princes threw him into a horrible pit and left him to die there. From this fate he was saved by the Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech, who interceded for him with the king, and procured his restoration to the milder form of imprisonment which had preceded. On the approach of the Chaldæan host, when utter despair fell upon the doomed city, Jeremiah, by publicly purchasing a field at Anathoth from his cousin Hanameel, signified that the ravaged land should yet again belong to its rightful owners, and he proceeded to utter those predictions of an ultimate restoration for Israel which are the brightest passages in his mournful pages (xxxii. 36–xxxiii. 26).

After the city was taken Jeremiah was led off with the other captives as far as Ramah; but there his fetters were suddenly struck off. It is probable that Jeremiah had visited Babylon (xiii. 4) and was known by face to some of the principal Babylonians; it is certain that the policy of non-resistance to Nebuchadnezzar which he had advocated recommended him to their favour. This explains the fact that when he was recognised by his captors at Ramah, the general, Nebuzaradan, offered either to take him to Babylon and treat him honourably there, or to leave him with Gedaliah, who had been made the governor of Judah. Jeremiah elected to remain with Gedaliah, prepared, doubtless, to help his friend in the task of reorganising the distracted country. But the misfortunes of Judah were not yet ended. The good Gedaliah was shortly afterwards assassinated, and Johanan, the military leader upon

whom the governorship naturally devolved, fearing that the Chaldæans would perhaps visit the murder of Gedaliah with undiscriminating vengeance, determined to flee into Egypt, and leave the country to its fate. He and his confederates consulted Jeremiah as to the expediency of their plan, but when the prophet in Jehovah's name bade them stay in Judah, where God would protect them, instead of taking his advice they seized both him and Baruch and carried them by force into Egypt. And in that country we get our last glimpse of the great prophet. In the city of Tahpanhes he foretold the destruction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (xliii. 8–13), and denounced the idolatries of the Jews settled in Egypt, of whom but few, he foretold, should ever return to see their own land (xliv., xlv.). How long after this the prophet may have lived is uncertain. An early Christian tradition declares that the Jews at Tahpanhes, enraged by the prophet's warnings and threatenings, stoned him to death; but though this tradition is probable enough in itself, there is, of course, no sufficient evidence of its truth. Whatever the circumstances of his death, Jeremiah is constituted a martyr by his life, and both in his mission and his sorrows he may well be looked upon as a type of the suffering Messiah.

It may be helpful to recapitulate the chief dates connected with Jeremiah's life and work:—

Circa 646–641.—Birth of Jeremiah.
„ 639.—Accession of Josiah.
„ 626.—Call of Jeremiah.
„ 621.—The Book of the Law discovered in the Temple.
„ 609.—Josiah slain at Megiddo. Jehoahaz reigns for a few months.
„ 608.—Jehoiakim begins a reign of eleven years.
„ 597.—Jehoiachin. First siege of Jerusalem and deportation of king and the flower of the nation.
„ 586.—Second siege. Jerusalem destroyed, and Zedekiah and a crowd of captives carried off to Babylon.

Jeremiah's Writings.—It was not till the year 593, nearly thirty years after his Call, that the prophecies of Jeremiah were committed to writing. An interesting account of the event is given in *Jeremiah* xxxvi., where we are told that Baruch the scribe wrote on a roll at Jeremiah's dictation all the prophecies which he had uttered during his career as prophet. This roll Jehoiakim in a fit of temper threw into the fire, whereupon the prophet was bidden to rewrite it and add to it "many like words." These prophecies form, no doubt, the nucleus of our present book, but it is doubtful whether even the nucleus has come down to us in an unaltered form. It is admitted on all hands that the present sequence is most confused, no chronological order being maintained and no definite principle of arrangement followed. The text of the Septuagint, which differs widely from that of the Hebrew version, seems to be even more chaotic; so that we may be certain the final revision is not due to the prophet himself, but to some editor who seems to have placed the different manuscripts side by side just in the order they reached him. It is the looseness of arrangement which constitutes the difficulty in reading Jeremiah's writings. Were they arranged chronologically the general sense would be comparatively easy to follow.

As a writer Jeremiah is simple and pathetic. He is characterised by a curious trick of repetition, which is not wearying, but possesses a distinct charm. His writings owe their beauty less to literary power than to the depth of feeling they display, and to an almost feminine tenderness which makes itself felt even in the utterance of the sternest judgement. His influence upon his great successor, the Second Isaiah, is very noticeable. It was Jeremiah who first introduced into prophecy the figure of the Servant of Jehovah which the later prophet elaborated; where he writes "I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter" (xi. 19) we seem to hear a prelude to Isaiah liii.; and it is impossible to read the sarcastic account of the manufacture of the idols in x. 9 ff. and not be reminded of the many similar passages in the Prophet of the

Restoration. Jeremiah is fond of teaching by means of symbols, often of a very simple and primitive kind; *e.g.* the almond tree seen in a vision signifies that God will hasten His work (i. 11, 12), a tilted cauldron boiling over prefigures an invasion from the north (i. 13, 14), the rotten girdle symbolises reprobate Judah (xiii. 1–11), bottles filled with wine typify the drunk and infatuated nation (xiii. 12–14), the smashing of an earthenware pot is an acted parable of the destruction of Jerusalem (xix. 10), and the wearing of yokes and bands shows that the nation will be carried into captivity (xxvii. 1–4). This prophet's writings are full of such emblems, and their simplicity doubtless answered their creator's purpose in making his meaning clear even to the meanest comprehension.

Jeremiah's message had, of course, much in common with the teaching of other prophets: like them, he was first and foremost a preacher of righteousness, denouncing the national sins and urging the people to repentance; but like them, also, he addressed himself to the peculiar circumstances of his age, and the conflict between the rival policies of his time—the policy of submitting to Babylon and that of revolt, based upon "trust in the shadow of Egypt"—is vividly reflected in his pages. A list of his predictions will perhaps serve best to bring before us the main outlines of his prophecy:—

Invasion "from the north" issuing in captivity (i. 13–16; iv. 6 ff.; vi. 1 ff.; x. 22; xv. 12, R.V., etc.).

Ultimate restoration of the Jews (v. 10–18; xxiii. 3; xxiv. 6; xxvii. 22; xxx.–xxxiii., etc.) *after seventy years* (xxv. 11; xxix. 10).

The doom of the Nations (xxv. 15–26; xlvi.–xlix.; [l., li.]).

The conquest of Babylon the oppressor (xxv. 12 ff.; xxvii. 7, 22; [l., li.]).

The coming of the Messiah (xxiii. 5–8; xxxi. 31 ff; xxxiii. 14–16).

As regards the invasion "from the north," most critics are of opinion that originally in the *earlier* prophecies (iv. 3,

vi. 30) it referred to a terrible irruption of the Scythians into Syria, the details of which are given by Herodotus, and which must have taken place in Josiah's reign. They certainly marched through the territory of the Philistines, and doubtless made excursions into Judah, driving the country folks into the towns much as is described in iv. 5. The description of these "watchers come from a far country" (iv. 16), this "great nation raised up from the sides of the earth" (vi. 22), is singularly applicable to the barbarous Scythians who spared neither age nor sex; "they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea," etc. (vi. 23). But of Judah in the days of that invasion Jehovah said, "I will not make a full end" (v. 18), as though a further judgement were to befall, and it is undoubtedly the Babylonians that are alluded to in most of the predictions of invasions "from the north."

Space will not permit of more than the briefest description of the contents of these chapters, but when the date and occasion are pointed out, most of the prophecies are easily understood.

Chapter i. *Jeremiah's Call.*

Chapters ii.–x. *Warnings and Threatenings.*—With one exception these prophecies were doubtless included in the original "roll" written in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and belong probably to the time of Josiah (iii. 6). The exception is x. 1–16, which is addressed not to men who were *practising* idolatry, as in the rest of i.–x., but to a people *in danger of learning* heathen superstitions and of being impressed by the imposing system of idolatry which surrounded them. It may have been a message sent by Jeremiah to his countrymen in Babylon subsequent to the first deportation in 597.

Chapters xi., xii. *The rediscovered Book of the Law.*—These chapters must have been written in the eighteenth year of Josiah (621) when the king read the solemn words of *Deuteronomy* xxvii. ff. in the ears of the people. They should be studied in connection with 2 *Kings* xxii., xxiii.

Chapter xiii. *The Buried Girdle.*—From the allusion to the queen-mother (*v.* 18, R.V.), it is almost certain that this

was written during the brief reign of the young Jehoiachin in 597.

Chapters xiv. 1–xvii. 18. *The Drought.*—The prophet takes the drought as his text, and proclaims other sterner judgements to come. This section belongs probably to the time of the covetous and oppressive Jehoiakim, to whom there is perhaps an allusion in xvii. 11.

Chapter xvii. 19–27. *The Sabbath.*—At the time, probably, of Josiah's Reformation.

Chapters xviii.–xx. *The Divine Potter.*—The lessons from the potter's art (xviii., xix.) are rewarded by the persecution of the prophet (xx.).

Chapter xxi. 1–10. *A message of doom* during the final siege of Jerusalem in 586.

Chapters xxi. 11–xxiii. 8.—*The Fate of the Kings.*—The prophet's judgement on three of the kings of his day—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin—are here placed side by side, and from their evil rule Jeremiah looks on to the days of the ideal king (xxiii. 5–8). Shallum, of course, is Jehoahaz, and Coniah is Jehoiachin.

Chapter xxiii. 9–40. *False Prophets.*—Time of Zedekiah.

Chapter xxiv. *The Good and Bad Figs.*—The former signified those who had gone into captivity with Jehoiachin, the latter those who remained in Judah.

Chapter xxv. *Carchemish: the Results that should Flow from it.*—Written, as the first verse tells us, immediately after the Babylonians, by the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish, became the dominant power in the East.

Chapter xxvi. *The Prophet tried for his Life.—Circa* 608 (*v.* 1).

Chapter xxvii. *The Frustrated Alliance.*—The neighbouring countries sought alliance with Zedekiah against Babylon (*v.* 3). The prophet foretells that all who will not submit to Babylon shall go into captivity. In verse 1 "Jehoiakim" is admittedly a mistake for Zedekiah.

Chapter xxviii. *Against the False Prophets, viz. Hananiah, Ahab, and Shemaiah.*—Time of Zedekiah.

Chapter xxix. *A Letter to the Exiles in Babylon.*—Time of Zedekiah.

Chapters xxx.–xxxiii. *Prophecies of Restoration.*—These were written while Jeremiah was in prison, in the tenth year of Zedekiah (xxxii. 2; xxxiii. 1).

Chapter xxxiv. 1–8. *A message of doom* to Zedekiah during the last siege; similar to xxi. 1–10.

Chapter xxxiv. 8–22. *A curse on slave owners* who, in terror at the Babylonian advance, had set their slaves free, and when the siege was temporarily raised had again enslaved them.

Chapter xxxv. *The Rechabites*, having taken refuge in Jerusalem from marauding Syrians, Moabites, etc., Jeremiah uses them as a text. Time of Jehoiakim. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 2.)

Chapter xxxvi. *The Roll and its Fate.*

Chapters xxxvii.–xliii. *Jeremiah's Personal History during and after the Final Siege.*

Chapter xliv. *Jeremiah to his co-refugees in Egypt.*

Chapter xlv. *A Word of Comfort to Baruch.*

Chapters xlvi.–xlix. *Prophecies about Foreign Nations*—Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon.

Chapters l., li. *Against Babylon.*—The occasion is narrated in li. 59–64. In the fourth year of his reign Zedekiah paid a visit to Babylon, taking with him Seraiah, the chamberlain. To the latter Jeremiah gave a roll containing a description of the evil that should come upon Babylon, and told him to read it to the exiles, and then throw it into the Euphrates. Such a proceeding is entirely in keeping with the prophet's method, and we may unhesitatingly accept the story as true. Nevertheless, it seems almost certain that l., li. 1–58 is not the writing in question. These chapters are full of fiery indignation against Babylon, and fierce joy at her overthrow; but Jeremiah regarded Nebuchadnezzar as the "servant of the Lord," and speaks of Babylon throughout his prophecies in quite a different strain. In xxix. we are told that in the days of Zedekiah the prophet wrote to the exiles, bidding them seek the peace of Babylon and pray to the Lord for it,

for its power should be their peace (*v.* 7). How, then, could he write in the fourth year of Zedekiah, "Go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord"? (li. 45). It seems clear that this prophecy was written by one who occupied the same standpoint as the Second Isaiah, who lived at a time when the return from captivity was imminent (li. 50), and who witnessed the series of events which issued in the downfall of Babylon (l. 41; li. 28). For obvious reasons it must have been issued anonymously, and it was very natural that it should come to be identified with the roll which was sunk in the Euphrates.

Chapter lii. *A Second Account of the Capture of Jerusalem.* —This has been already narrated, incidentally, in xxxix.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

The theme of *Lamentations* is the final siege of Jerusalem in 586, and the subsequent desolation of Judah. By combining the notices in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Historical Books with those of Josephus we get a vivid picture of the siege and what followed. The whole of Judah had already been conquered, except Lachish, Azekah, and the capital, when, on the tenth day of the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year, the final investment began and forts were built all round the city (2 Kings xxv. 1). The siege that followed was obstinate and bloody, and lasted for sixteen months. The fire of the besiegers was destructive from the beginning; famine soon lent its aid to the foe, and became so severe that some of the besieged even fed upon their own children; pestilence in due course broke out in consequence of the numbers of unburied dead, and all who were left in the city were reduced to the same level of misery and starvation. At last, on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year, a breach was made in the walls, and at midnight

the Chaldæans rushed in and seized the city and Temple. Zedekiah, and such soldiers as he could gather round him, fled from the opposite side of the city towards Jordan, but he was recognised by some of the apostate Jews, captured near Jericho, and taken to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, about ten days' journey from Jerusalem. There after some form of trial (2 Kings xxv. 6) a terrible punishment was inflicted upon him for his perjury and rebellion; his sons were first of all slain before him, and then his eyes were put out, and he was carried away to Babylon loaded with fetters. A month later Nebuchadnezzar gave his orders that Jerusalem should be razed; the Temple and the "great houses" were burnt, the mighty walls of the city were levelled with the foundations, and all the inhabitants of the district except "the poorest of the land" were deported to Babylon. Thus, for the time, Judah almost ceased to be a nation.

The incidents of this terrible siege are recorded by an eye-witness in *Lamentations* with a minuteness which is almost photographic. We see the living skeletons creeping about the city (iv. 8, 9), we catch glimpses of women furtively feeding upon their own offspring (ii. 20; iv. 10), we sicken with pity at the terrible sufferings of innocent infants and children (ii. 11, 12, 19; iv. 3, 4); and then when the city is taken we watch the awful massacre, the fugitives hiding in the city (iv. 18) or hunted like wild animals in the open (iv. 19), the helpless girls and women pitilessly ravished (v. 11), the princes tortured (v. 12), and those who survived the massacre put to hard and degrading labours (v. 13). We hear, too, the mocking taunts of the surrounding peoples as the hated Jews pass under the yoke (i. 21, 22; ii. 15, 16, etc.). But the poem is more than a picture of Judah's terrible sufferings; there is woven into it a confession of the justice of the punishment (i. 5, 8, 18, etc.), and of the beneficent uses of adversity (iii. 25–30, etc.); and the terrible picture is relieved by faint gleams of trust in the mercy of God (iii. 22–4, etc.), and of hope that His former kindness would yet be revived, His ancient promises fulfilled (v. 19–21, etc.).

The five chapters of *Lamentations* are really five strophes, the first four of them being alphabetical or acrostic. Each of these consists of twenty-two verses (for the sixty-six verses of iii. are really twenty-two triplets), but the initial letters of v. do not form the alphabet, and it would appear from verse 20 that it was written somewhat later than the four strophes which precede it. The poem does not follow any settled plan, and therefore no outline of its contents is possible. One point only needs to be noted. In two passages the third person is dropped and the first person singular substituted. In the first of these (i. 11 to end) the speaker is Zion personified; in the second (iii.) the prophet speaks, *making himself for the time the representative of the nation.* It is in this chapter that the note of trust in God is strongest and most persistent (see iii. 22–42 and 55–66).

Who was the author of *Lamentations?* It is admitted on all hands that it was written by one who witnessed the siege, and who composed the elegy shortly after it, but the majority of modern critics say that there is a slight balance of probability against Jeremiah being the author. The grounds urged for this opinion, however, are far from being decisive. It is said that Jeremiah, who was strongly against any alliance with Egypt, would never have written (iv. 17) "Our eyes do yet fail in looking for our vain help: In our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save." But surely here the prophet is identifying himself with his nation, and it is just the confession he was likely to put into the mouth of remorseful Judah. So, too, when he speaks of Zedekiah, whom he despised as "the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord . . of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the nations," it is the nation and not the prophet who speaks. The linguistic argument is also urged, but it is not pretended that it is of a weighty character, as in the comparison between the First and Second Isaiah, and it cannot outweigh the fact that "the same sensitive temper, profoundly sympathetic in national sorrow, and ready to pour forth its emotions unrestrainedly, manifests itself both in

Lamentations and Jeremiah."* If this picture of Judah's woes be not by the hand of the prophet we shall certainly have to class it, borrowing the language of the art galleries, as belonging to "the school of Jeremiah"; and where the contrary evidence is so slight and nothing is to be gained either historically or exegetically by any change it seems hypercritical to dispute the traditional opinion.

A large part of *Lamentations* is appointed by the Anglican Lectionary to be read in Holy Week, and the Church thus stamps the miseries of which it treats as typical of our Lord's sufferings. In what sense is this true? A "type" would seem to result when one person or set of circumstances resembles another, and so serves to illustrate the same principle. Thus Jeremiah was a type—of course imperfect—of our Lord, not only because he was a righteous man witnessing against the sins of his nation, but because, like our Lord, he had to thwart what were held to be the patriotic desires of the people, and so range against himself all the prejudices and passions of the fellow-countrymen whom he passionately loved. Two righteous souls placed under like conditions are apt to act and suffer in a similar manner, and so the lesser of these becomes a type of the greater. Thus if Psalm xxii. was—as Hitzig and others suppose—written by Jeremiah, we can readily understand why our Lord should quote its opening verse upon the Cross, and why it should describe with such startling accuracy the Saviour's sufferings. Similarly, we can understand the typical nature of Lamentations iii., where the prophet speaks in his own person. The chapters where Zion is the speaker present more difficulty; but it must be remembered that there were in Jerusalem righteous men like Jeremiah, Baruch, and Gedaliah, who probably suffered more from the calamities of the nation than the hardened sinners, and who might be truly said to suffer vicariously, since the judgement God sent was necessary to the preservation of religion and was not the fruit of their own sin. These men were the spiritual

* Driver.

Israel: in them was lodged the religious inheritance of the past, and it is undoubtedly their voices we hear in *Lamentations*. If we suppose that the words "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (i. 12) were spoken by bloody and idolatrous Jerusalem, suffering just vengeance for her sins, it might seem blasphemous to quote them as anticipatory of the feelings experienced by the Messiah; but when we think of these words as uttered by the *ideal* Zion, their typical character is seen to be indisputable.

EZEKIEL

Life.—Of the details of Ekekiel's life very little is known. He was the son of a certain priest named Buzi, and assuming him to have been about thirty years of age at the time of his Call he must have been born in the reign of Josiah (*circa* 620), and must have witnessed, as youth and young man, the growing corruption of the nation during the years which preceded its captivity. He was carried into Babylon with Jehoiachin and the first batch of exiles in 597, and was a prominent member of a community of Jews who were settled at Telabib on the banks of the Chebar (iii. 15), a "river" or stream in Babylonia, by some identified with the Royal Canal of Nebuchadnezzar. His Call took place in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's exile, *i.e.* B.C. 592, and at that time he was already a man of considerable influence among his co-exiles.

He dates his Call also in Chaldæan style as happening in the "thirtieth year in the fourth month" (i. 1), the reckoning in this case being possibly from the accession to power of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel was married (xxiv. 18), lived in a house of his own (viii. 1, etc.), and was held in great estimation by the elders of the people, who often came officially to consult him on public affairs (xiv. 1; xx. 1, etc.). The first years of his life as prophet were largely taken up in foretelling the second successful siege

of Jerusalem and the final captivity of Judah—events which the exiles were naturally very reluctant to believe, as in the Jewish capital and monarchy were centred all their hopes of ultimate restoration. When the prophet's predictions were fulfilled in 586 his influence among the exiles was greatly increased, and his predictions of the future restoration of Israel were listened to with greater respect. The latest date in his book is the twenty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity, *i.e.* 570 B.C. (xxix. 17), and how much later than this he lived, or what were the circumstances of his death, it is impossible now to determine, the traditions which have come down to us having no claim to rank as history. The following dates bring the epoch of Ezekiel before us:—

Circa 620.—Ezekiel born.
„ 597.—Exiled to Babylon with King Jehoiachin.
„ 592.—Ezekiel's Call.
„ 586.—Ezekiel's first group of prophecies (iv.–xxiv.) fulfilled by destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of King Zedekiah.
„ 570.—Last glimpse of Ezekiel, who prophesies the destruction of Egypt (xxix. 17, etc.).

Ezekiel's Writings.—Ezekiel's book differs from those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, inasmuch as it is not a mere collection of prophecies or groups of prophecies placed side by side by an editor, but is a work carefully elaborated throughout by the prophet himself. It follows that it smacks more of the study, less of the open air than theirs. By way of further comparison, it may be said that Ezekiel is less sublime than Isaiah, less simple than Jeremiah, and less spontaneous than either. The methods of presenting his lessons, however, are more varied than in any other prophet; sometimes he employs elaborate allegory, sometimes he speaks by symbolical actions, sometimes the truth is given him in a vision which he describes minutely, sometimes he employs a parable or a poem to convey his meaning; and the pictures which he thus draws possess

often great vividness and beauty. He was a priest, and his priestly training influenced his writings much more than was the case with Jeremiah. Like all the prophets, he was inflexible in his fidelity to the mission God had given him to do: he never failed to rebuke the idolatry and unfaithfulness of the exiles, though he recognised their superiority to those who were left in Judah, and was convinced that in them alone lay the hope of a future restoration; and he never ceased to reiterate the coming destruction of Jerusalem, pronouncing it sometimes with a sternness which forms a striking contrast to the tenderness of Jeremiah, in whose utterances of doom one never fails to detect an undertone of heart-broken grief. Ezekiel was entrusted with a marvellous gift of imagination, but in emotional power he was not so richly endowed as his intellectually less gifted contemporary. The two prophets had the same message to deliver; but their method of delivering it illustrates the truth that the Divine revelation is given in "divers manners," and that the operation of the Spirit is characterised by "diversities of gifts."

Ezekiel's book may be conveniently divided into five parts: I. His Call; II. Predictions of the Destruction of Jerusalem; III. The Doom of Foreign Nations; IV. Israel's Restoration; V. The Polity of the Restored Nation.

I. *The Call* (i.–iii).

Thrown into an ecstasy the prophet sees a marvellous vision which he describes with great minuteness—the Eternal and His living chariot. The chariot seems to typify the Divine force as evidenced in providence and the visible universe, and the qualities symbolised by it are glorious beauty, universality (denoted by each creature having a face, wings, and hands facing every way), omniscience (shown by the rings full of eyes in i. 18), and the combination of intelligence, courage, strength, and insight (symbolised by the faces of man, lion, ox, and eagle, i. 10). The living chariot was instinct with the Spirit of God (i. 12, 20), and carried the heavenly throne and Him who sat thereon. From the throne came a voice bidding the prophet perform with courage the

painful and difficult task allotted to him of rebuking the nation, and predicting "lamentation and mourning and woe." The glorious vision here depicted recurs several times in the prophet's writings (iii. 23; viii. 2, 4; x. 1–22; xliii. 2, 3, etc.). It is noteworthy that the commission given to Ezekiel in these opening chapters is not solely to the nation, but to persons in their individual capacity (iii. 18–21), and from this time onward what may be called the individualistic as distinguished from the national note is heard with growing frequency in the prophetic writings.

II. *Predictions of the Destruction of Jerusalem* (iv.–xxiv.).

Nearly one-half of the Book of Ezekiel is taken up with terrible pictures of the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the vengeance about to fall on apostate Judah. In the eighth chapter we have a vivid picture of the many debasing idolatries which at this time were practised in Jerusalem, and if with this we read the truly appalling list of the moral crimes and odious offences that were common in the land in the closing years of the monarchy—as recorded in the twenty-second chapter—we shall be convinced that never was a nation more utterly corrupt or more ripe for judgement. The length at which the coming captivity is dwelt upon is explained not only by the fact that it constituted a most momentous crisis in the history of the Chosen People, but because it affords a vivid object-lesson for all time. The moral tragedy, whose awful unfolding we witness in these chapters, is one which has often been repeated in the course of the ages in the history of corrupt nations and communities.

The prophet foreshadowed the coming judgement in many ways. He made it known to his fellow-exiles, first, by acted prophecy. He took a tile to represent Jerusalem, put an iron pot over it to symbolise the fortifications that should be built round it by the Babylonians, and so for many days laid mimic siege to it (iv. 1–8). He acted the parts of the starving garrison (iv. 9–17), and, shaving his head, he showed by burning his hair, cutting it, and dissipating it to the winds the various fates that would befall the inhabitants of Judah (v.).

This dumb-show was enacted in the year 592, six years before the final captivity. With similar intentions a year later he dug through the wall of his house and crept through the breach in the guise of a captive, to signify what would be the fate of King Zedekiah (xii.). At other times he delivered his messages by describing his visions. Thus in 591 he is carried by the Spirit to Jerusalem, when he sees God send His messengers to destroy the guilty inhabitants, and to scatter fire over the city as symbolical of its devotion to destruction. Then he watches the living chariot bearing the sapphire throne and the Awful Presence pass out of Jerusalem, leaving the wretched city to its fate (ix., x., xi.). On other occasions the prophet throws his message into lyrical form, as in the poem which might be entitled "The End is Come" (vii. 5–27), or in the still more picturesque verses which might be designated "The Glittering Sword" (xxi. 1–18, 28–32). Ezekiel's favourite method of teaching, however, is the similitude, and he employs this again and again to depict the coming doom. Thus in chapter xvi. there is a picture of a naked new-born infant lying in its blood by the roadside; a passer-by takes it, washes it, clothes it, and adopts it as his own. The child grows into a fair maiden, and when "the time of love is come" she is espoused by her benefactor, who lavishes every kindness upon her. Soon, however, she proves untrue, and is guilty of numerous and shameless fornications. She is therefore rejected, and is judged "as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged" (*v.* 38). A similar figure is employed in chapter xxiii., where Samaria and Jerusalem (*i.e.* Israel and Judah) are pictured as two harlots—Oholah and Oholibah. Other similitudes are those of the burnt and stricken vine (xv.); the two eagles and the vine (xvii.); the lioness and her whelps (xix. 1–9), in which, of course, the lioness is Judah and the whelps Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin; the burning forest (xx. 45–49); and the rusty pot (xxiv. 1–14, R.V.). This last parable was spoken on the very day that Nebuchadnezzar finally invested Jerusalem. About the same time Ezekiel's wife died suddenly, and the prophet was commanded to make no mourning for

her, thus signifying the stupefaction which would seize upon the exiles when they heard that the city on which their hopes were centred had indeed come to its end.

This section is one long chant of doom, the calls to repentance being addressed, for the most part, not to the nation—it was too late for that—but to the better-disposed of the exiles in their individual capacity (xviii., etc.). And yet the purpose of God never faltered: even in this the sternest part of Scripture the "doctrine of the Remnant" is heard again and again. God will establish His "everlasting covenant," and through the Chosen People the whole earth shall yet be blessed (vi. 8; xi. 16–20; xvi. 60; xvii. 22–4, etc.).

III. *The Doom of Foreign Nations* (xxv.–xxxii.).

Chapters xxvi. and xxviii. 20–4 contain brief prophecies of the punishment of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Zidon, all of whom had rejoiced at the overthrow of Judah.

On similar grounds the judgement of the great city of Tyre is pronounced in chapters xxvi.–xxviii. 19. In the same year in which Jerusalem fell, viz. 586, Nebuchadnezzar invested Tyre, which had revolted along with other neighbouring nations. This was the occasion of Ezekiel's prophecy (xxvi. 7), which is one of the most forceful and dramatic in the whole of Scripture. In xxvi. the fate of Tyre is described in general terms, and with special reference to the siege then threatened. In xxvii. we have an elaborate comparison of Tyre to a magnificent merchant galley, with a description of all her different parts, her crew, her merchants, etc., followed by the account of her sudden wreck "in the heart of the seas," watched by horrified spectators on other ships and on the neighbouring shores. In xxviii. the Prince of Tyre, in his pride and wealth, is described as the image of a cherub, with wings outspread, covered with gold and precious stones; but the prophet threatens that soon he shall be overthrown and consumed to ashes in the fire.

The prophecy on Tyre twice declares that she shall be scraped bare as the rock (xxvi. 4, 14); it predicts that she shall be made a "place for the spreading of nets," and shall be

"built no more" (xxvi. 14); and the question has been often asked, Was not Ezekiel's prophecy falsified by the event? The facts are these. The siege by Nebuchadnezzar lasted thirteen years, according to Josephus, and it is a disputed question whether at the end of that time it was actually stormed or not, though it seems probable that it made some form of submission. Ezekiel, writing sixteen years later, admits that though the besiegers worked in the trenches and on the fortifications till "every head was made bald and every shoulder peeled," yet neither they nor Nebuchadnezzar got any reward for their toil (xxix. 18). Jerome explains this by saying that before the town was taken the fleet escaped with all the treasure, but he is the only ancient writer who asserts that Nebuchadnezzar actually captured the city, and he does not quote any authority. On the other hand, so far from Tyre being finally destroyed by the Babylonish army, Jerome, writing a thousand years later, confessed that it continued to be, in his day, the most noble and beautiful city of Phœnicia. This does not involve the failure of Ezekiel's prophecy, unless he had meant that all the destruction and desolation of which he spoke were to be brought about in his own day and by Nebuchadnezzar. If he had meant that, his own words in xxix. 17–20 would be a confession that he had prophesied falsely, and in that case we may well wonder that he did not excise the prophecy from his book! But if the true nature of prophecy be borne in mind, no insuperable difficulty presents itself. Whatever its exact result, the thirteen years' siege by Nebuchadnezzar gave the proud city a shake which was ominous of other calamities which the ages would bring upon it. The words which the prophet attributes to Jehovah, "I will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up," exactly describe what happened. In the course of the centuries Tyre became servant in succession to Chaldæans, Persians, Greeks—under whom it suffered one of the most remarkable sieges in history, when Alexander the Great put its garrison to the sword and sold 20,000 of its inhabitants as slaves—Romans, Arabs, Christians,

and Saracens. Under the Saracen dominion (thirteenth century A.D.) it reached a point of desolation as low as the prophet describes, and from that date onward it has never attained even to the shadow of its former greatness.

The doom of Egypt is recorded in chapters xxix.–xxxii. As in the days of Isaiah, so in those of Ezekiel, Egypt had proved a "broken reed" to Judah. King Zedekiah's revolt from the Chaldæans had been based upon promise of Egyptian support —a promise which, as Jeremiah foretold, proved utterly vain. Ezekiel now foretells the misfortunes in store for Israel's ancient oppressors, including a captivity of forty years, followed by the entire degradation of the kingdom. He likens Pharaoh Hophra to a crocodile drawn out of the Nile and thrown out upon the land to be devoured by wild beasts (xxix. 1–7). Nebuchadnezzar, he declares, shall spoil Egypt as a reward for his long siege of Tyre (xxix. 17–20), and shall lay the country desolate (xxx.). Pharaoh Hophra's fate shall be that of Assyria; and then follows a graphic picture of the sudden overthrow of the great Assyrian Empire under the similitude of the felling of a lordly cedar tree (xxxi.). The section concludes with a "lamentation" over the descent of Egypt into Sheol (xxxii.).

The Egyptian and Babylonish records of the period are too defective to enable us to explain in detail the fulfilment of the prophecy. Inscriptions, however, have been discovered describing the murder of Pharaoh Hophra (see Jer. xliv. 30), and the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar in the thirty-seventh year of his reign (567), and "a few years later the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah regarding the destruction of Egypt were fulfilled,"* and under the Persian dominion Egypt became a "base kingdom" (xxix. 14–16).

IV. *The Promise of Restoration* (xxxiii.–xxxix.).

When the destruction of Jerusalem, so long foretold by the prophets, had taken place, Ezekiel's thoughts are fixed more and more upon the restoration of his people. That this may take place there must be at least a nucleus of righteous men

* C. A. Wallis Budge in *The Dwellers on the Nile*.

in the community, and so the prophet again lays stress upon the doctrine of individual responsibility (xxxiii.). As to the actual rulers or "shepherds" of Israel they have used their office only for their own aggrandisement (xxxiv. 1–10, 17–21), but the time approaches when the true Shepherd of Israel will guide His flock with tenderness and care (xxxiv. 11–16, 23–31). The Israelites* shall be again restored to their own land, and the neighbouring nations who have hated and robbed them—especially Edom—shall be punished (xxxv., xxxvi., 1–23); and again the vision of the Messianic kingdom flashes upon the prophet's eye (xxxvi. 24 to end). The condition of the exiles, indeed, was such as to make such a glorious restitution impossible, but by the vision of the valley of dry bones the prophet is taught that nothing is too hard for the Lord (xxxvii.); and further to assure the captives that God's purposes cannot be frustrated, an ideal picture is conjured up of the powers of the world gathered against Jehovah under Gog the prince, and broken upon the mountains of Israel (xxxviii., xxxix.). The section closes with the final picture of the Messianic kingdom (xxxix. 25–9).

V. *The Polity of the Restored Nation* (xl.–xlviii.).

Finally the prophet proceeds to give directions, some practical, some ideal, as to what the nation should do and be when it was restored to its own land—an event, as we now know, for which the people had still to wait more than thirty years. No doubt Ezekiel, as all the prophets, puts the moral above the external forms of religion, and indeed he does not neglect to put the moral ideal of the polity before the rulers of the restored nation: "Thus saith the Lord God: Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgement and justice; take away exactions from My people, saith the Lord God" (xlv. 9). But we know from the psalms of the Exile that the people, as was natural, valued as never before the Temple and ordinances of which their exile deprived them, and that these had become to them the

* The Exiles assumed the name of *Israel* from the time of the Babylonish Captivity onward.

embodiment of all righteousness. That Ezekiel, himself a priest, should lay great stress upon these things, and make them symbols in his teaching, is only what we should expect. Consequently these closing chapters deal almost exclusively with the externals of religion. Much of them, indeed, is taken up with the solemn re-enactment of observances ordained in the Pentateuch; but in addition the prophet gives a detailed plan with all the measurements of the restored temple, etc., lays down the duty of the "prince" in the theocracy, parcels out the land among the twelve tribes, and so forth. How much was intended to be literally acted upon, how much was ideal, it is impossible now to determine. He would be very destitute of imagination who should suppose that the river described in xlvii., which issued out of the Temple, which miraculously healed the desert, and was fringed with miraculous trees (*v.* 12) was ever intended to be taken literally. Considering the prophet's fondness for symbolism of all kinds, we may be quite sure that here we have to do with allegory, and no doubt there is an ideal element in other parts of this section. We must concede that these closing chapters are not so fruitful in religious instruction to Christians now as is the rest of the book, but we may be sure that they played an important part not only in inspiring the exiles with courage and hope, but in guiding to some extent the plans of those who thirty years later had to reorganise in Palestine the religious life of the nation.

DANIEL

Modern criticism, which has done so much to revivify Scripture, make its meaning clear, and remove difficulties, has, in one or two instances, arrived at results which must inevitably cause something of a shock to those who encounter them for the first time. So it is as regards the modern verdict on Daniel. We have been accustomed to believe that it was written in the time of Cyrus, and that the first six chapters

are strictly historical; we now know that it was written several centuries later, and that there is an element of legend in it. It is a remarkable fact that in the Hebrew Canon it was not classed with the Historical Books and Prophets, but was placed in the Hagiographa, or miscellaneous group. And the Jews were right and we wrong. The first six chapters of Daniel are not strictly speaking history, but Hagadah, *i.e.* traditional stories used with a religious purpose: the remaining chapters are best described not as prophecy, though undoubtedly there is a prophetic element in them, but as apocalyptic writings—writings, that is, in which "the eye, and not the ear, is the organ of the seer,"* visions and not words are revealed to him. In any case the late date and the relatively unhistorical character of the book must now be recognised. They have been proved alike by the method of the Higher Critic and by the discoveries of the Archæologist; and the most skilful defenders of the conservative view are on this question at one with those whom they usually regard as their opponents. Pusey in England was the representative upholder of the traditional opinion; but the ablest of his disciples have given up his position as hopeless. It must not be supposed for a moment, however, that by adopting the new view we are compelled to regard *Daniel* as uninspired, or unworthy of a place in the Canon; we are only compelled to acknowledge that *hitherto we have placed it in a wrong category*. "In warmth of religious feeling, and in the unflinching maintenance of Divine truth, the book resembles closely enough the writings of the older prophets; but also—which is here most important of all—the course of events in the immediate future, the fall of the tyrant after three and a half years, and the triumph of the saints of God, is defined beforehand by the author as certainly as by any prophet of the older time. Upon this account, chiefly, he has obtained recognition in the Jewish Church, if not as a prophet, at least as a man inspired of God."†

Daniel, of course, was not a myth but a real person.

* Bishop WESTCOTT. † DILLMANN.

Ezekiel twice alludes to him; he couples him with Noah and Job as a conspicuously righteous man (Ezek. xiv. 14), and in a sarcastic passage he says to the king of Tyre, "Thou art wiser than Daniel." If the author's account in *Daniel* i. 1–5 is correct, Daniel himself must have been about thirty-four years of age when Ezekiel thus writes of him (in 586 B.C.), and it is a little difficult to believe that his name could have passed into a proverb at so early an age. If therefore a contemporary of Ezekiel, he was probably much older than *Daniel* makes him; but he was evidently a real person, and the traditional stories of him which the author embodies in his book probably contained a substratum of fact. That they are not strictly historical a brief examination will perhaps serve to show, but it will be impossible to find room for all the evidence which has accumulated on the subject.

The first verse of the first chapter speaks of a siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim. Yet in the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim Jeremiah (xxv. 9, etc.) writes as though the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar were yet to come, and the historical books are silent as to any such siege as that mentioned in *Daniel.*

In chapter v. and throughout his book the author speaks of Belshazzar as the last native king of Babylon. But the contemporary cuneiform tablets give us full and complete details of the period, and it is absolutely certain that the last king was not Belshazzar but Nabonidus. True, Nabonidus had a son Belshazzar, but he was never king, nor did he play any part in the crisis when Cyrus entered Babylon.

This Belshazzar is repeatedly spoken of (v.) as the son of Nebuchadnezzar. In point of fact, he was the son of the usurper Nabonidus, and not related to Nebuchadnezzar at all. The author, moreover, gives the impression that Belshazzar immediately succeeded Nebuchadnezzar; in point of fact, he was separated from him by four kings, though their reigns were short (Evil-merodach, Neriglissar, Laborosoarehod, and Nabonidus). Of course his father, the usurper, *may* have married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar *may*

have meant by "son" grandson, but this is mere conjecture, and even if it could be proved would only partially solve the difficulty.

In the last verse of chapter v. we are told that the overthrow of Babylon was effected by "Darius the Mede," who succeeds Belshazzar as king. In point of fact, however, the conqueror was Cyrus. Here again, of course, there *may* have been some under-king named Darius in the time of Cyrus, but there is no mention of him in the annals of Babylon, and in any case our author describes him as *sole king*, who organises the whole kingdom (vi. 1, etc.). There is reason to fear, therefore, that Cyrus is here confused with Darius Hystaspis, who succeeded to the throne some years later. In ix. 1 Darius is spoken of as "son of Ahasuerus," *i.e.* son of Xerxes. This is a further confusion, for the real Darius was not the son but the father of Xerxes, so that the book apparently was written long after the death of the latter king, which took place about 465 B.C.

We should gather from v. 30 that Babylon was stormed by night, and its king is said to have been slain. In reality Babylon peacefully submitted, and Nabonidus was not slain. There is here an evident confusion with a siege of Babylon that took place later under Darius Hystaspis.

Cyrus is spoken of as though he succeeded Darius, whereas Cyrus was the conqueror of Babylon and the first king of the new dynasty, and two kings reigned after him before any Darius sat on the throne of Babylon.

When we turn from the evidence of history to the evidence of language the result is the same.

The "Chaldæans" are coupled in ii. 2 with magicians and enchanters, just as we now speak of gypsies as "Egyptians." This use is never found in the Babylonian inscriptions, and indeed would have been quite impossible in that age. It was not till some centuries later that the term lost its territorial significance and came to mean astrologer or fortune-teller. This word is therefore clearly an evidence of later date. Professor Sayce even goes so far as to say, "In the eyes of the Assyriologist the use of the word Kasdim (in ii. 2) would

alone be sufficient to indicate the date of the work with unerring certainty."

There are probably at least fifteen Persian words in *Daniel* (Driver). Now, in all the voluminous inscriptions previous to the conquest by Cyrus, no Persian words occur except a single proper name; but after the Persian supremacy, gradually and slowly a few words crept into use in Aramaic, and several are found in the later Jewish books. The presence of so many Persian words in *Daniel* tends to show that it was written some centuries at least after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.

Three Greek words are found in *Daniel*, and two of these, *ψαλτήριον* and *συμφωνία*, are not even found in *Greek* literature till nearly two centuries after the time of Cyrus, and they could scarcely have become naturalised in Aramaic till a still later date.

Part of Daniel is written in Aramaic (ii. 4 to vii. 28); this is of a type similar to that found in *Ezra* and spoken in and around Palestine from about the third century B.C.

The Hebrew is also that of a late date.

If the above evidence be carefully studied, not only will it appear absolutely impossible that *Daniel* could have been written by a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, but it will become clear that it could not have been composed earlier than the period of the Greek conquests in the East, *circa* 300 B.C. An examination of the visions in *Daniel* will make it at least *probable* that it belongs to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, nearly a century and a half later.

Contents of Daniel.—The narrative part of Daniel needs no comment. It remains to consider briefly the visions, and before doing this it will be necessary to give a brief account of Antiochus IV. (Epiphanes), whose doings are undoubtedly the theme of several chapters in Daniel's apocalypse, and, together with certain brief summaries of the centuries preceding, are probably the theme of the whole.

Antiochus Epiphanes was king of Syria (Antioch), one of the four kingdoms into which the dominion of Alexander the

Great was divided after his death. He was the youngest son of Antiochus III., surnamed the Great, and when his elder brother Seleucis IV. was assassinated he managed by flattery and intrigue to set aside the rightful heir, his nephew Demetrius, and ascended the throne in 175 B.C. During his reign the High Priesthood was twice bought by men who sought to introduce Greek customs into Judaism, and the faithful High Priest, Onias III., was murdered in 172 for rebuking his successors' sacrilege. Cleopatra, the sister of Antiochus, married Ptolemæus I. king of Egypt, but in spite of this connection, Antiochus waged three if not four campaigns against Egypt, and was only prevented from conquering it by the interference of the Roman legate. After the second campaign Antiochus pillaged the Temple at Jerusalem, and after the third his soldiers seized the capital and massacred a multitude of the inhabitants, selling many others into slavery. The Temple worship was then forbidden, and a heathen altar, the "abomination of desolation," erected in it (168 B.C.). The desecration of the Temple lasted, roughly speaking, for three and a half years, but the actual period will vary according as it is dated from the suspension of worship or the erection of the altar. In 167 took place the revolt of Mattathias and his seven sons, the Maccabees, and after a heroic struggle the victory rested with the Jews, and the altar was re-dedicated in 165. In 164 Antiochus Epiphanes died suddenly while warring in Persia.

It will be best to consider first those of the visions about which there is no dispute, and these will perhaps afford some guidance as to the rest. About the meaning of the vision in chapter viii. there is practical agreement, and indeed most of it is interpreted by the Angel Gabriel at the Seer's request (16). It predicts how the Medes and Persians (the "ram with two horns") should be overcome by Greece (the "he-goat"), and especially by Alexander the Great (the "great horn"). The dominion of Alexander should then be broken into four kingdoms (Syria, Egypt, Thrace, and Macedonia). Out of one of these should arise a king ("the little horn"),

who should wax great towards the south, and the east, and the "glorious land," *i.e.* Judah (9), and should cause both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot, and the burnt-offering to cease for 1,150 days, that is three years and two months—for so we may interpret the "two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings" (11–14). For a time the wicked king should prosper, but after long persecuting "the holy people" and defying the "Prince of princes," he should be "broken without hand" (24, 25). No one disputes that this chapter gives first a sketch of universal history from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the division of Alexander the Great's empire, and then, with greater definiteness, relates the story of Antiochus Epiphanes and his relation to the Jews.

About chapter xi. 1–36 there is also no controversy. There an angel foretells to Daniel the expedition of Xerxes against Greece, the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the division of his dominions into four kingdoms. Then in verses 5–20 he gives a summary of the alliances and contests which shall arise between the kings of Syria (the north) and Egypt (the south) in the succeeding centuries. Finally, in verse 21, he begins to speak of a "contemptible person," *i.e.* Antiochus Epiphanes, who shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries, who shall wage three campaigns against the south, *i.e.* Egypt (22–31), in the third of which he shall be withstood by Rome (29–30) and shall return greatly chagrined. On his return from the second campaign he shall "be against the holy Covenant," and shall "do his pleasure," an allusion to the carrying off of the sacred vessels from the Temple (28); and on his return from the third campaign he shall profane the sanctuary, take away the burnt-offering, and set up the abomination of desolation (31). But the oppressed people, though cruelly used, shall "do exploits" (32) and shall be holpen "with a little help," words which refer, of course, to the revolt under the Maccabees. The verses from 36 to end seem to be a summary or recapitulation, and in conclusion we are told that the impious king shall "come to his end and

none shall help him" (45). Here we have practically the same ground covered and the same story told as in chapter viii.: first a sketch of universal history, and then, more minutely, the story of Antiochus Epiphanes.

We may now turn, perhaps more hopefully, to those chapters about which there has been most dispute.

In chapter vii. the Seer sees four beasts of terrible aspects come up from the sea. These, we are told (*vv.* 17, 23), are four kingdoms, and some commentators take them to be (1) the Chaldæan, (2) the Medo-Persian, (3) the Macedonian, (4) the Roman. If this be so, the Seer here gives the history of the world far beyond the point reached in the visions already considered; for the ten horns in that case signify the various kingdoms into which the Roman Empire ultimately broke up, and the "little horn" some power of antichrist that shall hereafter arise. But other commentators take the four beasts to signify (1) the Chaldæan, (2) the Median (Cyrus and Cambyses), (3) the Persian, (4) the Macedonian kingdoms. In that case the vision is parallel to those already considered; the ten horns are the Seleucidæ, or kings of Syria (Antioch), and the little horn is again the Jews' oppressor. It is admitted that the "little horn" is Antiochus Epiphanes in viii. 9, and it is difficult to believe that the expression would be used in a second passage to signify a different person. Further, the "little horn" is described exactly here as in the later chapter, as boastful (*v.* 8) and blasphemous (*v.* 25), as persecuting the saints and abrogating the ordinances of the Law (*v.* 25). Then we are told in this passage, as in chapter viii., that the suspension of the Law shall not last more than three years and a half—a time, times and half a time (*v.* 25); and altogether it is difficult to resist the impression that Antiochus Epiphanes is the theme of both passages.

The vision ends with the appearance of the Heavenly Judge, and one like unto a "son of man," to whom is given universal dominion. Here, as in so many other places, we find the "prophetic foreshortening"; the deliverance of the Jews from their terrible peril brings into view the great final

deliverance in the advent of the Messianic kingdom (13, 14, 27).

If the explanation of chapter vii. be accepted, the empires symbolised by the composite image in chapter ii. will be the Chaldæan (gold), the Median (silver), the Persian (brass), and the Macedonian (iron); and this interpretation has the support of the great name of Ewald in Germany, and of Westcott in England. The stone "cut out without hands" signifies, of course, the kingdom of God on earth, against which no powers of this world shall prevail.

The passage ix. 24–7 may perhaps also be better explained with reference to Antiochus Epiphanes than in any other way, though it must be confessed no explanation exactly fits the vision. The reference to the re-dedication of the most Holy Place (*v.* 24, R.V., margin), to the cutting off of the Lord's anointed (Onias III.), when, after centuries of effort, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were complete (*v.* 26), to the coming of the prince (Antiochus Epiphanes) to destroy city and sanctuary, to his alliance with apostate Jews, and his suspension of the Temple sacrifice and oblations for three and a half years (half a week, *v.* 27), all seem to point in the same direction. The chief difficulty, of course, is that the interval between the end of the Babylonish Captivity and the death of Onias III. was 366 years, whereas the vision makes it 434 (sixty-two weeks); but the discrepancies which occur, if we adopt any of the other interpretations of this passage, are not one, but many. The anointed one, the prince in verse 25, is of course Cyrus (Isa. xlv. 1, etc.), and the date of his coming is given with approximate accuracy as forty-nine years from the time the message concerning Restoration came to Jeremiah; the date of the message was 588, the date of Restoration 538. As usual, the Messianic kingdom is announced as closely following the deliverance (*v.* 24).

In chapter xii. there are still faint echoes of the episode with which the book is chiefly concerned. In verse 7 we hear again of the "time, times, and an half," and in verse 11 there is a last allusion to the abrogation of sacrifice and the setting up

of the "abomination of desolation"; but these things have now become themselves but shadows and symbols, and the vision seems to expand and open up vistas of eternity.

We have already seen that *Daniel* could not have been written earlier than 300 B.C.; but if we have accepted the principle already so often illustrated, that the prophets did not deal *minutely* with any events but those actually pressing upon the nation, that their *primary* message was to the men of their own generation, then we shall adopt the view to which so many other indications point, that this book was written in the midst of the trouble with Antiochus Epiphanes, *circa* 167 B.C. It was, and was meant to be, a cryptic book; it would be understood by friends, but meaningless to foes. In this it resembles John's Apocalypse, and its purpose was to inspirit the Jews under the persecution of Antiochus, as John's was to encourage the Christians under the persecution of Nero.

HOSEA

Hosea, the son of Beeri, unlike the prophets we have hitherto considered, belonged to the northern kingdom, Israel. The unity of the two nations was, however, never lost sight of by the prophets, and just as the prophets of the South often spoke of Judah by the generic name of Israel, so Hosea does not consider that his message is for the subjects of his own sovereign alone, but again and again turns aside to address a word of reproof or encouragement to the southern kingdom. Hosea was married, and had two sons and a daughter, and his wife and children became "signs" to Israel. He lived in a time of great prophetic activity, when Micah and Isaiah were prophesying in Judah, and Amos in Israel; but the age was also one of exceptional wickedness. We may perhaps call him the Jeremiah of the Northern Kingdom. Like Jeremiah, he was a man exceptionally tender-hearted and sensitive, who yet was impelled to denounce the sins of his fellow-countrymen, and proclaim, with a sternness foreign

to his nature, the impending fall of the capital and the captivity of the people. Whether Hosea lived to witness the destruction of Samaria and to share in the march of the enslaved people to Assyria is uncertain.

The superscription of Hosea's prophecies is peculiar, and needs to be considered. We should naturally expect him to date his work by the reigns of the northern kingdom alone; yet it is described as belonging to "the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam (II.), the son of Joash, king of Israel." The explanation is sometimes given that "the Scriptures will not deign to count by the reign of Zechariah, the degenerate son of Jeroboam II., nor of the military adventurers who succeeded him." This, however, does not account for the fact that the Jewish kings, though later in date, are mentioned *first*. A more probable explanation is found in the fact that the later prophecies (iv. to end) were put forth only a few years before the destruction of Israel, and so were copied and disseminated chiefly by scribes of Judah, who naturally dated them by the reigns of their own kings, retaining, however, the name of Jeroboam II., which had been prefixed to the earlier prophecy (i.–iii.).

The times of Hosea are accurately reflected in his writings. His career began in the long and outwardly prosperous reign of Jeroboam II. (786–746), the fourth king of Jehu's dynasty. This king extended the boundaries of the ten tribes as they had never been extended since the days of Solomon; but while there was the appearance of power and wealth, in reality this covered a deep-seated corruption which prepared the way for the nation's sudden and ignominious collapse. His son, Zechariah, was murdered after a reign of only six months, and with his death Jehu's dynasty came to a close, and Hosea's prophecy was fulfilled, "Yet a little while and Jehovah will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." This was the beginning of the end. A short period of bloody anarchy followed—a period, as we learn from the Assyrian chronology, of less than a quarter of a century—

during which five kings reigned—Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea—three of these being murdered by rebellious subjects, who usurped their thrones, and the last being carried into captivity. As the nation had no stability and the kings no power, the rival factions constantly leaned upon foreign support and intrigued with Assyria and Egypt, and the absence of firm government led to moral disintegration of the most terrible kind. This is the condition of things which the prophecies of Hosea reveal. The princes indulge in hideous orgies at the king's table (vii. 5); the priestly cities are mere brigands' strongholds—"As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem: yea, they have committed lewdness" (vi. 8, 9) Not only has the land fallen into idolatry, but into the most hideous form of it which makes whoredom on the part of brides and maidens a matter of course (iv. 13, 14, R.V.); and as a consequence the nation has fallen into a condition of unspeakable corruption—"There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; there is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood" (iv. 1, 2). As to the assassins and usurpers who in rapid succession occupy the throne, Jehovah will not recognise them (viii. 4; vii. 7; xiii. 10), and indeed even their subjects do not take them seriously, for their language ever is, "We have no king: for we fear not the Lord; and the king, what can he do for us?" (x. 3, R.V.). They lean for help now on one, now on another of the great military powers of the time: "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria" (vii. 11; see also ix. 3; xi. 5; xii. 1, etc.); but Jehovah will make these empires the instruments of their punishments. Much as He loves them (xi. 3, 4, etc.), sorely though it pains Him to afflict them (xi. 8, etc.), He will be to them what the moth is to wool, what rottenness is to wood (v. 12); He will watch for them as a leopard; He will meet them as a bear bereaved of her whelps (xiii. 8); He will, like a lion, carry them off as a prey, and there shall be none to deliver (v. 14).

The prophecies of Hosea divide themselves into two parts:—

I. *The Unfaithful Wife* (chaps. i.–iii).

Hosea is bidden marry a harlot, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. She bears a son, whom the prophet is commanded to call Jezreel, *i.e.* "God's scattering," for God will scatter the House of Israel for its sins. Next she bears a daughter who, by Divine command, is named Lo-ruhamah, or "Unpitied," for God will not pardon the sins of His people. Lastly, she has another son, Lo-ammi, or "Not My people," for Jehovah refuses to be the God of the revolted nation. The second chapter is an extended interpretation of this acted parable, with the promise that on repentance Lo-ruhamah shall become Ruhamah ("that hath obtained mercy"), and Lo-ammi shall be called Ammi ("My people"), while Jezreel shall be interpreted as God's *sowing*, because the scattering of the people of Israel shall lead to a mighty harvest. In the third chapter the story of Gomer is continued. The prophet finding her unfaithful had put her away, and meanwhile she had fallen to the lowest state of degradation. But at God's command the prophet buys her back—buys her for "an old song," as we should now say, so low had she fallen—and treats her with kind severity for many days in order that she may repent and again be loved as of old. And the section ends with the remarkable prophecy, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return to seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days."

There can be no doubt that we have in the story of Hosea's marriage a real history, and it has been questioned whether we can indeed suppose God to have commanded the prophet to marry an adulteress. The true explanation is probably that originated by the late Professor Robertson Smith, and adopted by Professor George Adam Smith. The prophet doubtless married Gomer believing her to be worthy of his love. During and after the birth of his children he discovered

her real character and divorced her; but later he was moved with compassion for one he had so deeply loved and so often forgiven, and by a supreme proof of his mercy and goodness he at last completely broke down the woman's hardness and won her from her evil courses. Then looking back upon his past life he saw how he had indeed been led by *God* in all that he had done, and his own experience enabled him to enter into God's feeling for sinful Israel as never before. Read in the light of this interpretation these chapters have a beauty and a meaning unseen before.

The date of this section can be fixed with approximate exactness. The three chapters form one organic whole, and were undoubtedly written while the "house of Jehu" still occupied the throne (i. 4), and also, judging from i. 1, while Uzziah was still king of Judah. It is clear, therefore, that the date is *circa* 750 B.C.

II. *Miscellaneous* (chaps. iv.–xiv.).

This section reflects, as we have seen, the condition of the nation in the closing years of Israel's monarchy. It is clear that the end was rapidly approaching, but it seems certain that these chapters were issued at least thirteen years before the final captivity in 722. In chapter vi. 8 and other places the prophet speaks of Gilead as still a part of Israel, but we know that in the year 734 Tiglath-Pileser carried all the inhabitants of that region into captivity (2 Kings xv. 29; Isa. ix. 1, etc.). There is, further, no allusion to the alliance of Pekah and Rezin of Damascus against Ahaz, king of Judah, in 735. Probably, therefore, the latter section of Hosea's prophecies was issued *circa* 736 B.C.

With the exception of Amos, Hosea is perhaps the earliest of all the prophets whose writings have come down to us. He is therefore an important witness as to the date of the religious institutions contained in the Pentateuch, etc. He is acquainted with early traditions of the Patriarch, *e.g.* that Jacob took hold of Esau by the heel in the womb (xii. 3), and that he wrestled with the angel at Penuel, and had a vision of God at Beth-el (xii. 3 and 4). God had evidently long

instructed Israel by the prophets (vi. 5, xii. 10). Sacrifice and burnt offerings had been so long in use that already their inner significance was being lost sight of—it was by Hosea that the message first came, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (vi. 6). The prophet is familiar with the law (iv. 6), the solemn assembly, the feast day (ix. 5). Writing is no new thing in his time; there is already a voluminous religious literature, God's law is already written "in ten thousand precepts" (viii. 12, R.V.). Nay, apparently the prophet had even reached the advanced conception that Israel was God's Priest to mankind (iv. 6). These passages, admittedly written in the middle of the eighth century B.C., make it difficult indeed to accept a late date for the material contained in the Pentateuch.

The theme and style of Hosea are best described in the language of Ewald: "No older prophet has such profound and beautiful conceptions as he of the *love* of Jehovah, which outlasts all things and heals all evils. To this prophet the love of Jehovah is the inmost cause and deepest root of His relation to Israel. From earliest times love was employed in creating this community; it was violated and troubled by Israel; it punishes now in deep grief, but it can never deny its nature and fail; it will even save, and one day will heal all evils. . . . Hosea has a rich and vivid imagination, while his style is full, brief, and sententious. . . . To his painfully agitated heart, foreseeing calamity, it is impossible to unfold his thoughts in calm, long sentences, and to arrange his words in firm and strong order. The thought is too full, the sentence rapid and abrupt, the whole discourse often breaking itself up, as it were, in sobs."

JOEL

The prophet Joel was the son of Pethuel, and belonged to the southern kingdom; but beyond this nothing is known of the circumstances of his life. The question of his date will be discussed later.

The occasion of Joel's prophecy was the devastation of the country by a great plague of locusts. In this the prophet discerned the hand of Divine Providence, which is behind all natural phenomena, and accordingly he is not ashamed to lavish all his force as a poet upon his description of these terrible insects. The depicting of "God's army," as he called the locust swarm, is marvellously graphic, and the more it is compared with the description given by modern observers the more its accuracy is established. It seems at first a grotesque exaggeration to compare an insect only $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long with a lion and a war-charger, but to the eye of the naturalist "the denticulated jaw of the locust" (we are told) "does actually resemble the type of the lion," and so strikingly does the head of this species of insect resemble that of the horse, that the grasshopper, which belongs to the same family, is called by the Germans the hay-horse, and by the Italians the little horse. The prophet says of the locust swarms that they are "as the dawn spread on the mountains," and a modern traveller tells us that when the air is darkened by them, "the sun, shining upon the millions of yellow wing-cases, produces a coppery gleam, not unlike the dawning light of a stormy day." It is a little startling to hear the advent of these insects announced in the words, "The day of the Lord cometh"; but when we remember how the whole of our bodies, even the nerves by which we feel and the brains by which we think, are built up out of that which comes out of the earth—how, in a literal sense, "*all flesh is grass*"—we shall not deem any expression too terrible which is used to describe God's judgement when He takes away from a nation "the stay and the staff, the whole staff of bread and the whole stay of water." This plague never falls with its full force upon any European country, yet a few years ago a paragraph appeared in an English paper which enables us to realise partially how terrible its ravages may be. The paragraph announced that the governors-general of six Russian provinces had just met at Odessa to discuss the most efficacious means of stamping out a locust plague which threatened ruin to vast populations. In

one district a fertile and blooming agricultural estate of 7,500 acres had been within a few days entirely swept bare, scarcely a vestige of its cereals being left. An eye-witness described the ineffectual efforts of the army and the peasantry combined to drive off the locusts, and how at every step the winged plague rose in legions, swarming here and there in immense clouds, and realighting wherever their ravages were incomplete. There is no exaggeration in the prophet's vivid description of the scourge which God sent: "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains. A great people and a strong! there hath not ever been the like, neither shall there be any more after them, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, yea, and none hath escaped them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses, and as horsemen so do they run. Like the noise of the chariots on the top of the mountains do they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. At their presence the peoples are in anguish: all faces wax pale. They run like mighty men; they climb the wall like men of war; they march every one in his ways, and they break not their ranks. . . . They burst through the weapons, and they break not off their course. They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth quaketh before them; the heavens tremble; the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And the Lord uttereth His voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for He is strong that executeth His word—aye, the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" (ii. 1–11).

This vivid description of the locust plague is followed by an urgent summons to repentance—a summons which the Church has adopted as her own, and addresses to her children on the

first solemn day of the Lenten Fast (ii. 12–17). The people appear to have responded to the call, and God accordingly promised to "restore the years that the locust hath eaten," and to shower down upon the land every material blessing (ii. 18–27). But material blessings would not exhaust God's gifts; these should be followed by a baptism of the Holy Ghost: "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days I will pour out My Spirit (ii. 28, 29). The completest fulfilment of this prophecy is to be found, as St. Peter tells us, in the outpouring of Pentecost, but there were partial fulfilments doubtless both before and after that event. The principle the prophet enunciates is this, that when a great judgement or a great crisis issues in penitence and amendment there comes a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was eminently true of the Day of Pentecost. It was true of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of the reawakening of the religious conscience under the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitfield in the eighteenth century, which was followed by a strange ecstasy and fervour of spiritual life closely analogous to that which took place on the Day of Pentecost. And so doubtless in the prophet's own day, when the people had been humbled by the plague and then filled with gratitude by God's forgiveness and generosity, there was a similar outpouring of God's Spirit—such an exhibition of love and fervour in Judah as had not been seen there for many a day.

We might expect that the prophecy would end here. But directly the prophet speaks of the great outpouring of the Spirit he goes on to predict again "the great and terrible day of the Lord," to speak of "wonders in heaven and earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke" (ii. 30–2). How is this? Because when God's Spirit has been poured forth the battle between good and evil, right and wrong, goes on with tenfold intensity. The leaven begins to work, and there are

great upheavals. We have only to think of the destruction of Jerusalem and the other cataclysms which followed the rise of the Christian Church, and of the terrible convulsions and deeds of blood connected with the Reformation, to understand what Joel means. At first, indeed, the judgement he thinks of is a judgement upon the heathen for their cruelty to the Lord's people. The Jews had been so often captured that at this time, Joel tells us, a boy could be bought for a harlot's kiss and a girl for a draught of wine (iii. 3). But now that the people repented and were quickened by God's Spirit there would surely be a great day of the Lord. But as he proceeds the prophet's thought widens, until we come to the magnificent conception of the great battle between right and wrong in the Valley of Decision, with which the book closes (iii.). The scene is presented to us in symbols, but it is no merely national event, it is a world-judgement which is depicted in Joel's closing verses (12–21).

As regards the date of Joel, the circumstances described in his prophecy seem to fit two widely separated periods almost equally well, viz. *circa* 830 and the fifth century B.C. The data are as follows: No king is mentioned; there were no traces of idolatry or Baal-worship among the people, but the Temple services were duly observed; the Phœnicians and Philistines were the enemies of Judah, and had carried off both treasure and captives (iii. 4–8). Egypt and Edom had also done violence to the land (iii. 19), and Jerusalem had been "passed through" by some hostile nation (iii. 17). Now if the prophecy had been written *circa* 830, King Joash would then be in his minority and would not be likely to be mentioned, and the Temple services under Jehoiada the High Priest would be punctually performed (2 Kings xii. 2). The Philistines some fifteen or sixteen years before that date had carried off treasure and captives from Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxi. 16), and the Edomites had revolted from Jehoram (2 Kings viii. 20–2), while the memory of the invasion of Shishak king of Egypt a century before (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26) would still be fresh in men's memories. We have

indeed no contemporary account of the hostility of the Phœnicians, but seventy years later Amos accuses Tyre of delivering up Jews to Edom (Amos i. 9), and there can be no improbability in the surmise that the enmity spoken of by Amos may have existed in the days of Josiah. On the other hand, the conditions after the captivity suit the prophecy equally well, if not better. There was then no king, the Temple services were punctually observed, idolatry was extirpated, and the surrounding nations were at enmity with the Jews; the allusion to the foreign army "passing through Jerusalem," to the scattering of the people among the nations, to the "remnant" and "those that escape" (ii. 32) are easily understood if the prophecy was written after the return from exile, when, of course, only a portion of the captives had reoccupied the country. There is no allusion to the northern kingdom such as we should have expected to find in a Jewish prophet writing in the ninth century B.C., and this tells somewhat heavily in favour of the later date.

The style of Joel is very unlike that of Haggai and the Second Zechariah, and entitles him to rank with the older prophets, Nahum and Habakkuk. He is "thoroughly independent, original, and poetic," and the flow of his writing is distinguished by "ease and sweetness in conjunction with rare depth and volume."*

AMOS

The date of the prophet Amos can be fixed with approximate accuracy from internal evidence. It is clear that Jeroboam II. (786–746) had completed his conquests and was at the height of his prosperity when the prophet entered upon his mission. On the other hand, there is no indication of the alarm which was caused towards the close of Jeroboam's reign by the approach of the conquering Assyrians. The period of Amos' ministry thus indicated is *circa* 760–745.

* EWALD.

A confirmation is found in the allusion to a total eclipse of the sun in viii. 9—an eclipse which from astronomical calculations we know took place in 763. Amos is thus—if we leave the disputed dates on one side—the earliest prophet whose writings have come down to us. It is admitted that the work is from his own hand, and is not a compilation made after his death.

Amos did not belong to the educated classes, and had no formal preparation for his office: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son" (vii. 14). He was a man of lowly origin and humble occupation, and in his day must have been looked upon as a phenomenon, much as we look now upon a "peasant poet." He belonged to Tekoa, a village twelve miles south of Jerusalem, situated on the edge of a desert of the same name. Here he followed the occupation of a herdsman, but this employment being scantily paid, he was glad to eke out a subsistence by working as a dresser of sycomore trees (vii. 14, 15). The sycomore tree bears a kind of inferior fig, which is eaten only by the poor, and the fruit will not ripen unless pinched and irritated: that the prophet should have been content to perform this unskilled labour to fill up his spare time and add to his scanty wages is a proof of the extreme poverty in which his lot must have been cast. He lived during the prosperous and righteous reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, while Jeroboam II., the warrior king of Israel, was extending his conquests in the north and reigning over a profligate and luxury-loving people; and strangely enough it was not to his own nation, but to Israel, that the prophet was commissioned to preach. One episode in his career is narrated in detail. Amos went boldly to Beth-el, the seat of the idolatrous calf-worship, and there foretold the coming retribution. The priest Amaziah sent a report of this incident to Jeroboam; he had urged the seer to go away to his own country and not presume to prophesy at Beth-el, which was "the king's sanctuary, and a royal house"; but the prophet's reply was a prediction that this priest's family should perish by the

sword and his wife become a harlot, while the nation of Israel should be led away captive. Amaziah adds an involuntary tribute to the powerful nature of the prophet's preaching: "The land is not able to bear his words" (vii. 10–17). How long the mission of Amos lasted we do not know, but we may assume that he returned to Tekoa and ended his life there.

Though Amos was a peasant his style is not rustic and unrefined, but classical and pure. Bishop Lowth says truly of him—"Our herdman in the elevation of his ideas and the grandeur of his spirit is well-nigh equal to the foremost of the prophets: while in the splendour of his diction and the elegance of his composition he is scarcely inferior to any." It is, of course, true that his environment left its mark upon his work. Living a life of solitude and contemplation on the edge of the Tekoan desert, away from the conventionalities and shams of society, he learned to see an all-sufficient proof of the existence of God in the grand processes of nature. "Seek Him," he cries, "that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the deep darkness into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is His name" (v. 8). His encounters with wild beasts while watching his flock in the wilderness supplied him with images: "As a shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria" (iii. 12; see also iii. 4, 8; v. 19, etc.). Many of the implements of rural life are also employed by him as metaphors and symbols, *e.g.* threshing instruments (i. 3), the harvest wain (ii. 13), the plough (vi. 12), the basket of summer fruits—such a basket as Amos must often have filled when a "dresser of sycomore trees" (viii. 1), the sieve (ix. 9), the gin and snare (iii. 5), fish hooks (iv. 2), etc. So, too, he alludes to plowmen, reapers, sowers, grape-treaders (ix. 13); to gardens and vineyards (iv. 9); to blasting and mildew (iv. 9); to the palmerworm (iv. 9) and locust (vii. 1). Natural portents are also reflected in his writings. The

allusion to the total eclipse of June 15th, 763, has already been quoted. A great earthquake also occurred in his time (i. 1)—an earthquake so terrible that it is alluded to in *Zechariah* by a writer living probably nearly two hundred and fifty years later (Zech. xiv. 5). The prophet twice speaks of the land "trembling," and declares that it shall "rise up wholly like the River; and it shall be troubled and sink again, like the River of Egypt" (viii. 8; ix. 5); but whether these passages are predictive, or are to be taken as figures of speech borrowed from an event that had already taken place, it is impossible now to determine.

The subject of the prophecies of Amos was the punishment which should fall upon the people of Israel because of their oppression of the poor (viii. 6), selfish luxury (vi. 6; iii. 15; iv. 1, etc.), injustice (v. 12), and shameless immorality (ii. 7, etc.).

Chapters i.–ii.—God is the Judge of nations; Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Ammon, Moab, Judah shall all receive the appropriate punishment for their sins (i.–ii. 5), and Israel, whose wickedness was so gross and palpable, should certainly not escape the operation of the Divine law which affixes punishment to transgressors (ii. 6–16).

Chapters iii.–vi.—The coming destruction of Israel by a northern foe (v. 27; vi. 14) is foretold in a series of *discourses*.

Chapters vii.–ix.—The same truth is illustrated by a series of *visions*, interrupted by the historical episode of the visit of Amos to Beth-el (vii. 10–17), and closed by a prophecy of the ultimate restoration of Israel.

The Divine threatening was, of course, fulfilled in 722, when Samaria was taken, and Israel carried into captivity by the Assyrians. But how are we to account for the prophecies of the final restoration of Israel which are to be found in Amos (ix. 11–15), as indeed in other prophets? Are they to be understood as conditional on Israel's repentance, just as Jonah's prediction of the destruction of Nineveh was dependent on its remaining impenitent? Or is St. Paul's explanation sufficient, that true believers form the "spiritual

Israel"? Or are we still to look for a literal historical fulfilment and a return of the ten tribes to Palestine? Various answers will doubtless continue to be given to these questions. But for practical purposes it is sufficient that we recognise that hitherto the threatenings and promises have alike proved sure. The burden of the prophetic message to Israel and Judah was in effect this: *If* and *when* you repent, either as nations or individuals, God is willing to pardon and restore. What further exemplification of this truth the future may reveal we know not, but assuredly there is nothing in the history of the past to refute, and everything to confirm it.

As Amos is, according to many critics, the earliest of the prophetic writers, it is important, especially in view of recent theories, to scrutinise closely the religious institutions and ideas of Israel alluded to by him. Already in his day the moral law was held to be infinitely superior to the religious institutions in which it was enshrined (v. 21–4). Jehovah was no tribal God; He was the arbiter of nations (i. and ii.), and though Israel was His chosen instrument (iii. 2), He cared for other nations even as for them. The past history of the Chosen People, as revealed in the Pentateuch, appears to have been clearly known to the prophet. God had delivered them from Egypt (ii. 10; iii. 1, 2), had led them forty years in the wilderness (ii. 10), where they had fallen into grievous idolatry (v. 26, 27), had cast out the Amorite before them and planted them in (ii. 9). He had given Israel a law and statutes, and the prophet is evidently familiar with these statutes even in detail, for in ii. 8 he censures his countrymen for violating the command—"If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him by that the sun goeth down" (Exod. xxii. 26). He speaks of tithes and free-will offerings (iv. 4), of feasts and solemn assemblies, burnt-offerings and meal-offerings (v. 21, 22), and of the worship of God by means of songs and stringed instruments (v. 23). Like his contemporary Hosea, he regards the prophets as having long played an important part in the religious history of Israel (ii. 11). These allusions cannot

be reconciled with any theory which assigns a late date to the religious institutions of Israel. Moreover, the fact that shortly after 800 B.C. a peasant could write as Amos writes is evidence of a high state of literary culture at that date, and presupposes centuries of literary activity preceding it. Now in every nation religion is one of the first things with which literature busies itself, and it is therefore impossible to suppose that the Law had not, in some form, been committed to writing long before the time of Amos. The prophet's writings have thus evidential as well as ethical value.

OBADIAH

When the Chaldæans in 586 destroyed Jerusalem and carried Judah into captivity, the Edomites, though they were the kinsmen of Israel, not only showed a malicious pleasure in the misfortunes of the Jews, but co-operated with their enemies, and cut off many of the fugitives. This was bitterly resented by the exiled nation, and has left many traces in their literature. Thus the author of Psalm cxxxvii. prays, "Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day of Jerusalem, how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground." Ezekiel puts into the mouth of Jehovah the threat, "Behold, I am against thee, O mount Seir. . . . Because thou hast had a perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity. . . . I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee" (Ezek. xxxv. 3–6. See the whole chapter). The author of *Lamentations* utters similar threatenings (Lam. iv. 21, 22). The short prophecy of Obadiah is occupied with the same theme, the prophet announcing in vigorous and picturesque language the impending doom by which Edom's treachery to Judah shall be avenged. In the closing verses a glimpse is afforded of the Messianic Kingdom, when "saviours shall come up on mount Zion," and "the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (*v.* 21).

If Obadiah 1 to 9 be compared with Jeremiah xlix. 7–22 it will be found that the two passages have much in common, and indeed are to a large extent identical. The most probable explanation is that both adopted an older prophecy—the text of which is more closely reproduced in Obadiah—and expanded it. The two prophets recognised that the cup of Edom's iniquity was full, and that the fate announced by an ancient seer was shortly to be looked for. They therefore endorsed the prediction, each in his own way, Jeremiah writing probably a short time before 586, and Obadiah shortly after.

JONAH

When we examine *Jonah* we are at once struck with this fact, that it is not a book of prophecies; it does not resemble the Book of Isaiah or of Jeremiah, or of any of those writers who have left behind them inspired denunciations of sin and exhortations to righteousness, mingled here and there with predictions of future events. It is not a book of written prophecies, but a *story*, the history of a particular episode in Jonah's life which incidentally teaches most precious lessons. If we cite it loosely as the Book of *Jonah* it must be in the same sense as when we speak of the play of *Hamlet*, not meaning that Hamlet wrote the play, but that he is the subject of which it treats. If Jonah were the author he would in all human probability have written not in the third but in the first person. On the face of it, then, it is a narrative about Jonah written by someone else. It would require very clear evidence to make us set aside so obvious a conclusion, and no real evidence is forthcoming.

And next what is the date of the work? From a passage in the Second Book of Kings (xiv. 25) it is certain that Jonah prophesied towards the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam II., *circa* 780 B.C.; but if he was not the author of the book which bears his name, we are not limited to that period. Modern criticism inclines to fix a much later date, *circa* 450 B.C., the

two chief reasons being the presence of Aramaisms in the text, and also the character of the song of thanksgiving quoted in the second chapter. That song is very beautiful, and is the work of a true poet: yet it is evidently a mosaic of sentences taken from other sources and adapted to the circumstances of the prophet. Even the casual reader will recognise in almost every line a reminiscence of other psalms. Now it is claimed by modern critics that some of the psalms thus quoted are certainly not as old as the days of Jeroboam II., and that therefore the author of this book must have lived much later. Of course it does not in the least follow from this that there is no historical accuracy in the book. There is no doubt whatever that there was a prophet Jonah, and probably traditions of his life, both oral and written, survived till later ages. If we accept this theory we may illustrate it by the analogy of such a work as *King John*, written by Shakespeare centuries after that king's death, and yet no doubt substantially accurate in its facts—always bearing in mind, however, this distinction, that he who wrote the Book of Jonah was a man inspired by God, revealing spiritual truths which should be of vital import to countless generations of men.

But there is yet another very important question which needs to be asked about the book. Are we to look upon it as pure, unadulterated history, accurate in every detail; or while containing a basis of fact may it not belong to a different class of literature altogether; may it not be a divine parable, a beautiful picturesque story employed to convey to us spiritual truths? There is, of course, no *a priori* reason against the latter supposition, for we have already seen that the Holy Spirit does not disdain to use any device which may aid us to know God and to conform to His will, whether it be a curious alphabetical psalm to awaken interest and assist the memory, or an Eastern allegory by which, through the imagination, He may reach the heart.

Those who look upon the work as mainly an allegory base their conclusion partly upon the fact that its miracles belong to

a different order from those which we find elsewhere, and partly upon the general characteristics of the book. They see that the main purpose of the work is didactic, not historical; that it was written, not to record certain strange facts, but to teach certain lessons. On accepting this view, it is true, a grave question is sure to arise in the reader's mind. Our Lord alluded to Jonah's sojourn in the whale's belly: could He have done so if it were not a fact? The reply is that even if the story were an allegory, and were known to be so both by our Lord and His hearers, it might still have been quoted by Him as a sign. On one occasion He foretold His own violent death by a parable—the parable of the wicked husbandmen who said of the heir, Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. After our Lord's crucifixion the disciples would recall that parable, and would see that the prophecy contained in it had been fulfilled. Suppose someone had come forward and demanded to know where that vineyard was situated, or had denied that the story was historically true. Obviously such objections would not have disturbed the disciples, nor need the statement that the Book of Jonah may be an inspired allegory disturb us. There have been those who, holding the story literally true, have launched into profitless speculations as to the anatomical proportions of the sea monster which swallowed Jonah, or the rate of the growth of the gourd which arose in a night and perished in a night. At least it is not such points that God intended us to study. The Book of Jonah was written to teach us certain spiritual truths, and these remain the same, whatever the date at which it was written and whatever view we take of the framework of the story.

As to the main lesson which the book was written to inculcate, there can be little difference of opinion. Whatever the subsidiary truths it teaches—and there are several—the main truth is, in the words of the modern hymn, that

> "The love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind."

A God so gentle that He replied to the prophet's venomous outbreak (iv. 1–3) with merely the quiet inquiry, "Doest thou well to be angry?" the God who really loved and cared for a swarming heathen city, the God who declared He could not punish the innocent children who knew not their right hand from their left, the God who talked pityingly even of the "much cattle" that were in Nineveh, was a strange God to the sullen prophet in the story, and undoubtedly He would be an unfamiliar God to the contemporaries of the man who wrote the Book of Jonah. It must have required immense moral courage to present such a picture of the Divine character to the Jews of the fifth century B.C., and he who painted it must indeed have lived in advance of his time. For the conception of God contained in *Jonah* is still in the van of religious thought; many Christians have even yet not attained to it. Too often, like Jonah, we not only harbour narrow views, but are angry if anyone seeks to replace them with nobler and broader conceptions. How many resent the preaching of the wider hope! How few have firmly grasped the truth that "in every nation he that serveth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him"! How often men speak and act towards those who differ from them theologically

> "As if the Shepherd, who from outer cold
> Leads all His shivering lambs to one sure fold,
> Were careful of the fashion of His crook!"

How many fall into the error of the ancient Jew, "thinking the great God is theirs alone"! Few books of Scripture are more vital and necessary than *Jonah*, which shows that God cares for heathen no less than for believers, is mindful of dumb creatures even as of man, and when in the very act of punishing sin reveals Himself still as "a gracious God and full of compassion, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, repenting Him of the evil" (iv. 2).

MICAH

As to the exact period covered by Micah's ministry there is considerable controversy. What is certain is that he prophesied in the reign of Hezekiah, for we are told distinctly in *Jeremiah* xxvi. 18 that it was then he uttered the prophecy, "Zion shall be plowed as a field," etc. (Micah iii. 12). His words, as they have come down to us, are dated as belonging to the days of "Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." But against the accuracy of this statement two objections have been advanced: on the one hand it is contended that since iii. 12 belongs to Hezekiah's time, the earliest part of the book—viz. chapters i. to iii., which form an organic whole—belongs to that reign and not to those of Jotham and Ahaz; on the other hand, it is argued (by Ewald and others) that the picture of Judah's idolatrous condition in vi. and vii. (*e.g.* vi. 16) could not have been drawn while the effects of Hezekiah's reformation lasted, and must rightly belong to the reign of Manasseh. To the first objection it is a sufficient answer to say that undoubtedly we have in the *written* prophecies of Micah but a summary of his *spoken* prophecies, so that even if chapters i. to iii. were published first in the reign of Hezekiah the substance of a part of them may have been uttered earlier. The second objection may possibly be well founded. The dates of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah may have been prefixed to the earliest collection of the prophet's writings, and to these others may have been added subsequently in Manasseh's reign: we have, in fact, seen that the superscription to the writings of Hosea is confused from a similar cause. If these conclusions be adopted Micah's ministry must have commenced before the death of Jotham, *circa* 736, and must have extended beyond the accession of Manasseh in 695, thus covering a period of over forty years. It would appear, therefore, that Micah began to prophesy at about the close of Hosea's career, and that he was a younger contemporary of

Isaiah, and died about the same time as that prophet, or a little later.

Micah belonged to a little village called Moresheth (Jer. xxvi. 18), a dependency of Gath situated in a very fertile neighbourhood. His environment was thus very different from that of Isaiah, who spent his life at Jerusalem, a frequenter of the court, and a student of politics. It results that his writings are almost as rich in similes drawn from pastoral and rural life as those of the rustic prophet Amos. Whether he was himself a peasant, like that prophet, we do not know; but his righteous indignation against the oppressors of the peasantry again and again bursts into flame, and makes him well deserving of the epithet, "prophet of the poor," given him by a recent commentator. The condition of the rural population in his time seems to have been almost as pitiable as that of the French peasantry in the time immediately preceding the Revolution. The rich oppressors annexed their fields, evicted them from their homes (ii. 2), seized any of their goods to which they took a fancy (ii. 8), ravished their wives and plunged their children into degradation (ii. 9). Metaphorically speaking, the prophet declares, the selfish rich stripped the very flesh from the bones of their poorer brethren (iii. 3). In a horrible but powerful simile he describes the oppressor as treating the peasantry as a butcher treats his meat, hacking it and putting it in the cauldron—and this was no exaggerated image to use of a society so corrupt and selfish; for there is no doctrine of Political Economy more certain than this, that luxurious living, by deflecting industry into unproductive channels, causes penury, so that those who live idle and selfishly luxurious lives, even when not actively evil, are vampires who suck the life blood of the poor. Micah was raised up by God to thunder against such oppression and other moral evils, and to declare that ruin and captivity would sooner or later overtake the nation that indulged in them.

There is no good reason to doubt the authenticity of any part of the Book of Micah. Whether the prophecies were

arranged by the hand of the prophet himself or by an editor is a more difficult question to determine. If the former hypothesis is true, Micah must have been content to give merely brief summaries of his teaching, and it would appear that in one place at least a passage is misplaced or its context lost.

The best division of the book is threefold.

Chapters i.–iii. *The Sins of Israel and Judah.* — The prophet denounces the sins of both nations, especially the idolatry of Israel and the oppression of the poor practised in Judah, and foretells the punishment that shall follow. The predictions contained in this section are the destruction of Samaria by Sargon (i. 6–8), the ravaging of Judah by Sennacherib (i. 9–16), and the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem (iii. 12). The last judgement was averted in the prophet's own day through the piety of King Hezekiah, but fell in full force about a century and a quarter later (588 B.C.). The section contains also the "doctrine of the Remnant" (ii. 12, 13).

It is clear that the passage ii. 12, 13 is either misplaced or has been shorn of its context. A prophecy of restoration often, in the prophets, follows a vision of judgement, because the judgement is supposed to bring about reformation; but here it comes in the midst of a denunciation of national sins, and interrupts the sequence.

Chapters iii., iv. *Glimpses of Coming Glory.*—As usual, the vision of the future is founded upon the actualities of the present. There can be little doubt that the coming deliverance of Jerusalem from the assault of Sennacherib is the immediate occasion of this beautiful section. There is reason to suppose that the words "and shalt come even unto Babylon" (iv. 10) were written in the margin by some scribe, whence they have crept into the text, and if these be deleted the passage iv. 9 to v. 1 reads as a word of encouragement addressed to Jerusalem as the Assyrian troops were closing around her, and when many of the inhabitants had in terror fled the city and were camping in the open fields. The

section opens, "Now why dost thou cry aloud? Is there no king in thee, is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman in travail? Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion": and the prophet goes on to say of those who are threatening the city, "they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion" (iv. 12). This immediate deliverance is the cleft through which the prophet sees many future triumphs of righteousness.

The predictions contained in this section are as follows: the prophecy of the religious supremacy of Israel and of universal peace, beginning "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains" (iv. 1–8), found also in Isaiah ii. 2–4, and perhaps taken by both prophets from an older source; the "doctrine of the Remnant" (iv. 6–8; v. 7–9); the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib (iv. 9 to v. 1); the birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem (v. 2, etc.); the future extirpation of Judah's national sins, viz. idolatry, superstition, and trust in fortified cities (v. 10–15).

Chapters vi., vii. *The Lord's Controversy.*—These chapters, as we have seen, were probably written in the evil days of Manasseh, and here the sky, lately so bright, is again clouded over with menacing clouds. The Lord proclaims a controversy with His people, and arraigns them before His judgement seat. We read once more of "treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked," of wicked balances and deceitful weights, of "rich men full of violence," of idolatries such as disgraced the days of Ahab: "the prince asketh, and the judge is ready for a bribe, and the great man he uttereth the mischief of his soul: thus they weave together. The best of them is a briar; the most upright is even as a thorn hedge" (vii. 3, 4). And so again judgement is pronounced, "thy visitation is come" (vii. 4). But the prophet foresees that the end is not yet. He pictures Judah in captivity, but puts into her mouth a prayer of penitence (vii. 7–9), and foretells

that God "who delighteth in mercy" will yet tread Judah's iniquities underfoot and cast all her sins "into the depth of the sea" (vii. 11–20). There have not been wanting critics who have declared that this must belong to a later prophet, living in the time of the Exile. But, as Professor G. A. Smith points out, a prophet living then would have spoken of a restoration to *Jerusalem*, whereas this prophet (vii. 14) speaks of the repopulation of *Bashan and Gilead.* This must refer to the captivity of the people of that region under Tiglath-Pileser in 734, and must have been written while the event was still fresh in men's memories; Micah's date suits this exactly.

NAHUM

The superscription of his prophecy states that Nahum was an Elkoshite. By some it is maintained that Elkosh is Alkush, a village on the banks of the Tigris, where to this day the prophet's supposed tomb is pointed out. If we accepted this tradition we should have to suppose that Nahum was an exile, and that his forefathers had been carried into captivity by Tiglath-Pileser in 734 or by Sargon in 722. A careful perusal of the prophecy, however, makes it clear that the prophet writes from the standpoint of an inhabitant of Palestine (see *e.g.* i. 4, 15), and as the tradition which conflicts with this cannot be traced further back than the sixteenth century it may be dismissed as groundless. Much more worthy of respect is the tradition preserved by Jerome, that Nahum belonged to a village in Galilee, the ruins of which were still pointed out in Jerome's day, and were known as Elkesi. If this were so, it would account for the prophet's familiarity with the mountains of the north, Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon (i. 4), and it would also account for certain peculiarities of phraseology which might then be explained as provincialisms. Provisionally, therefore, the correctness of this tradition may be assumed. But if Nahum was a native of a Galilean village it seems evident that he migrated to the

southern kingdom and fulfilled his prophetic ministry there, for it is as a native of Judah that he speaks in chapter i.

The prophecy has, of course, but one theme—the coming destruction of Nineveh. Thanks to the determination of Assyrian chronology its date may be assigned within comparatively narrow limits. In iii. 8–10 we have a graphic description of the overthrow of No-amon or Thebes; so that the prophecy was subsequent to that event, which took place *circa* 664. On the other hand, the catastrophe which it foretold did not happen till 607. The prophecy was therefore undoubtedly written between these two dates. The description of the destruction of Thebes reads as though it were then a recent event, and Nineveh was evidently at the height of her glory when the prophet wrote (iii. 16, 17); so that the prophecy was probably written a good many years before 607, perhaps while the great king Asshurbanipal was still reigning. A stern joy breathes through Nahum's prediction of the coming retribution, which we can readily understand if his circumstances were as we have assumed. The inhabitants of Galilee must have been full of the bitterest hatred against the cruel nation who but two generations before had depopulated the country, leaving only a handful of the poorest inhabitants; and when the prophet migrated to Judah the older inhabitants there would still remember with keen resentment the campaign of Sennacherib, when, according to his own account, he had captured forty-six towns and fortresses and carried off more than 200,000 captives.

The descriptions of Nahum have been confirmed in detail by the Assyrian sculptures, even to the scarlet colour of the Assyrian shields (ii. 3). His prediction has been fulfilled to the letter, and his prevision of the suddenness and completeness of the great city's ruin is very remarkable: "He will make a full end; affliction shall not rise up a second time" (i. 9). "There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous" (iii. 19).

No summary of the contents of *Nahum* is necessary; the sense is very apparent. Only one caution is needful; the

opening verses of chapter ii.—"He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong," etc.—are not addressed, as so many commentators have assumed, to Judah in view of the approach of Sennacherib's army: they are an ironical invitation to Nineveh to resist the assault of Jehovah if she can. Nahum's theme may be epitomised in his own words: "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that put their trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make a full end, . . . and will pursue His enemies into darkness" (i. 7–9). It is the latter half of this truth, however, rather than the former, that Nahum was inspired to emphasise.

As a poet Nahum is scarcely surpassed by any Hebrew writer. There is no more vivid and graphic picture than that describing the stir of preparation in Nineveh on the approach of the foe (ii. 3, 4), or the fierce fighting in the streets (iii. 1–3, etc.). "His style is clear and uninvolved, though pregnant and forcible: his diction sonorous and rhythmical, the words re-echoing to the sense."*

HABAKKUK

Towards the close of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century B.C. the Chaldæan power was rapidly extending the area of its conquests, and the smaller nationalities trembled before the irresistible might and ruthless methods of the people under whose yoke they foresaw they must inevitably pass. The culmination of the Chaldæan successes was reached in the year 604, when they crushed their rivals the Egyptians in the decisive battle of Carchemish. At a period when the zenith of their power had not yet been attained (i. 5), and therefore prior to 604, Habakkuk uttered his prophecy. Like Jeremiah, he looked upon the Chaldæans as an instrument in God's hand employed to carry out His

* W. Aldis Wright.

designs, and he foresaw that when these designs were fulfilled the destroyers would themselves be destroyed as a just reward for their cruelty and injustice; but whereas Jeremiah dwells all but exclusively on the former truth, Habakkuk lays the emphasis on the latter. His prophecy is solely occupied with foretelling the future vengeance of the Almighty upon the "bitter and hasty nation."

The more the minor prophets are studied the more clearly it is perceived that the term "minor" does not denote any inferiority in the power of expressing the message God gave them to deliver. Short as is the work of Habakkuk which has come down to us, it shows that his gifts as a poet were not less brilliant than those of the greatest of his predecessors. This is especially manifest in the first and third chapters. The latter is an ode "which for sublimity of poetic conception and splendour of diction ranks with the finest which Hebrew poetry has produced."* It is a composition "unrivalled for boldness of conception, sublimity of thought, and majesty of diction."†

Chapter i. is a dialogue between Jehovah and the prophet. *Habakkuk* (2–4) laments the sinfulness of his people. *Jehovah* (5–11) declares in answer that He will raise up to punish the iniquity of Judah the terrible Chaldæans, whose cruelty and strength are tersely and vividly described. *Habakkuk* (12–17) nevertheless expresses the belief that God's people shall not utterly perish, and that the cruelties of the Chaldæans will ultimately bring down upon them the Divine judgement.

Chapter ii. The prophet stations himself upon his spiritual watch-tower to listen whether Jehovah's answer will confirm this belief or not. God answers him (*v.* 2). There is an ambiguity in verse 5, the word "wine" occurring where we should expect "Chaldæan" or some equivalent word; but there is no doubt that the verse, whether under a figure or not, is meant to be descriptive of the "terrible and dreadful nation," against which the enslaved peoples in turn each

* Driver.

† W. Aldis Wright.

denounces a "woe." The Chaldæans will be made to drink of the cup of God's wrath (16) because of their unjust conquests (6–8), rapacity (9, 10), blood-guiltiness (12–14), corruption of subject peoples (15, 16), and idolatry (18, 19).

Chapter iii. A glorious ode picturing Jehovah coming forth from His place to execute vengeance. That part which describes the theophany (3–15) is especially sublime.

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, and great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, by whom is meant in all probability the king of that name. He prophesied in the days of Josiah, who ascended the throne *circa* 639 and, according to Jewish records, reigned thirty-one years. From the description Zephaniah gives of the condition of Judah, it is certain he wrote before Josiah carried out his reformation in the eighteenth year of his reign, *i.e.* 621 B.C. On the other hand, Baal-worship was already partially extirpated, there being only a *remnant* of it left (i. 4), so that in all probability the prophecy was written later than Josiah's twelfth year, when the king "*began* to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places," etc. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3 and 4). The date of the writing which has come down to us may therefore be fixed with approximate accuracy at *circa* 625 B.C., and we may be sure that the prophet's words, uttered at a critical period, must have powerfully helped Josiah to bring the nation back to the worship of Jehovah.

Zephaniah's work might bear as its title, *the Judgements of Jehovah.* It begins abruptly (*v.* 2) by announcing a judgement which should utterly desolate the land, cutting off both man and beast, and sweeping away the paraphernalia of idolatry (*v.* 3 ff.). Jehovah should be priest, the foreign nations the guests—sanctified so as to be present at the sacred rite (see 1 Sam. xvi. 5)—and Judah the sacrifice (i. 7). Especially should the anger of the Lord burn against the

various idolatrous cults (i. 4, 5), the corrupt courtiers who imitated foreign customs and "filled their masters' house with violence and deceit" (i. 8 and 9), and the selfish rich, whose lives had stagnated into a practical atheism. Of these latter not one should escape: "At that time I will search Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. And their wealth shall become a spoil, and their houses a desolation."

In the second chapter the prophet emphasises the character of Jehovah as a God of judgement by foretelling the fate that shall befall the Philistines, Moab and Ammon, Ethiopia and Nineveh. He does this in the hope that Judah, "the nation that hath no shame," may yet repent "before the decree bring forth" (ii. 1), prefacing his announcement of the doom of foreign nations with the exhortation: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

In the third chapter the prophet returns to his denunciation of the sins of Jerusalem, drawing a terrible picture of the corruption of all classes: "Her princes in the midst of her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they leave nothing till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have profaned the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." In vain had Jehovah punished terribly the sins of other nations; His people would not take warning from their fate (iii. 6, 7). And yet the prophecy does not close in gloom. We hear once more the "doctrine of the Remnant": "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (12 and 13); and the prophet, like many other of the inspired seers, foretells the time when God's judgements shall bear fruit even among foreign nations, "and they shall all call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him with one consent" (iii. 10). The final verses (14–20) are a joyful picture of the happy times of the Messiah, and the closing words—"I will make you a name and a praise among all the

peoples of the earth, when I bring again your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord"—are words of cheer.

The reformation carried out by Josiah was transitory in its results; it deferred but did not avert the judgement announced by Zephaniah, which duly befell in 586, some forty years after the prophet's words were spoken.

HAGGAI

Haggai was the first prophet after the return from the Captivity. His prophecies were uttered in the second year of Darius, that is, in the year 520 B.C. In the interval between Zephaniah and Haggai the Jewish race had undergone strange vicissitudes. The predictions of the former prophet had been fulfilled, the Jews had gone into captivity, and their land, being so long left desolate, had largely gone out of cultivation (Zeph. i. 2, 3). Then some half-century later, in 538, permission was given to the Jews to return, and an attempt was made to reorganise the national life. Almost immediately steps were taken towards beginning the rebuilding of the Temple, without which the ordinances of Jehovah could not be kept; but the hostility of the Samaritans and the poverty of the returned exiles discouraged the work, and for sixteen years practically nothing was done. Then the prophet Haggai was raised up by God to reprove his countrymen for their neglect. His prophecies—all of them carefully dated—consist of four discourses, which begin respectively at i. 2, ii. 1, ii. 10, and ii. 20; the first and third being incentives to the work, the second and fourth messages of encouragement. These discourses are brief, and are possibly only the summaries of spoken addresses by which the prophet moved the people to begin the work and carry it to a successful issue.

Only one of these discourses presents any difficulty to the ordinary reader—the third, which begins at ii. 10. Here by God's direction the priests are asked, "If one bear holy flesh

in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it become holy?" The priests answer, "No." They are then asked, "If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?" And the priests answer, "It shall be unclean." And the prophet thereupon goes on to argue that the offerings of the people during the previous sixteen years had been unclean and had brought no blessing. The explanation is as follows. Good cannot be communicated by mere contact, but evil is infectious. The healthy man cannot give his health to another by touching him, but a sick man may spread contagion among all around him; and so is it also in the moral sphere. Within certain limits this is a law which is confirmed by experience, and it was from the first symbolically embodied in the ancient Mosaic Law. "And so," comments, in effect, the prophet, "that altar there" (ii. 14), "though itself sanctified, cannot mechanically sanctify the things offered on it; when the offerers are unclean so are their gifts; and you, who dwell in ceiled houses yourselves, yet will not build a House in which God may abide in your midst—you are unclean; your touch contaminates your sacrifices, and renders them unacceptable to Jehovah. Hence the curse which has rested during all these years upon your attempts to make your land fruitful."

Haggai has not the great literary gifts which distinguish most of the prophets. "If he is a minor prophet, he is also a minor poet, and even a very minor poet."* This, however, does not detract from the genuineness of his inspiration nor the effectiveness of his mission. The work he inspired the Jews to undertake was a practical work, and it was by practical addresses that he prevailed on them to undertake it.

* Samuel Cox.

ZECHARIAH

The chief result of modern criticism has been to show that certain books or parts of books belong to later dates than those assigned to them by the traditional view. By the same methods, however, an opposite conclusion has been reached in the case of Zechariah. Only chapters i. to viii. belong to the prophet mentioned in the superscription, most of the rest being much older. The determination of the precise date of the later chapters is, however, beset with difficulties; certainty is unattainable, and we must rest content with probability.

I. *The work of Zechariah II., grandson of Iddo.* Chapters i.–viii. B.C. 520–518.

Zechariah, called in the superscription the grandson, but by Ezra (v. 1) the son of Iddo, was a contemporary of Haggai, and the two prophets are more than once coupled together in *Ezra* as fellow-workers. Zechariah's purpose, like that of Haggai, was to encourage the Jews to rebuild the Temple and to rouse them from the deep depression which fell on them on their return from exile. Especially did he seek by his writings to strengthen the hands of the civil and ecclesiastical heads of the state, Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. His writings, like those of Haggai, are carefully dated, so that no critical question arises on that point.

The work of Zechariah II. may be divided into three sections.

A. Chapter i. 1–6 (520 B.C., eighth month).—Introduction. A call to repentance.

B. Chapters i. 7 to vi. 8 (520 B.C., eleventh month twenty-fourth day).—Eight visions, seen in one night.

(1) *The Messenger Chariots of Jehovah* (i. 1–17).—The angels of the four quarters of the earth give in their report to Jehovah. The nations are at rest, Judah alone is troubled, Jehovah declares that He will reverse this.

(2) *The Four Horns* (i. 18–21).—The four horns of the nations (the world-powers which had oppressed Israel and Judah) are cut down by four smiths.

(3) *The Measuring Angel* (ii.).—An angel is about to measure the city, but it is announced that there will be no measure to its extent or glory. Jehovah will dwell in her, and she will become the religious centre of many nations.

(4) *The High Priest and the Accuser* (iii.).—Joshua the high priest is accused by Satan, but acquitted and honoured by Jehovah, who beholds in him a type of the Messiah, the *Branch.* Under the symbol of the coping-stone of the Temple, engraved with symbols of the Divine omniscience, the Messiah's future presence in Judah is foretold.

(5) *The Golden Candlestick and the two Olive Trees* (iv.).—The former symbolises the restored nation, the latter the "sons of oil" or anointed ones, viz. Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and ecclesiastical heads of Judah. Through these grace shall be given to the community. All obstacles shall be removed from the path of Zerubbabel and the Temple duly completed.

(6) *The Flying Roll* (v. 1–4).—A roll inscribed with curses flies over Judah as a symbol that a curse shall light upon all sinners in the land and so purge out all evil from the sacred community.

(7) *Vanishing Wickedness* (v. 5–11).—The prophet sees a woman (Wickedness) cast into a sort of cask (an ephah-measure). A heavy weight of lead is placed on the top and she is transported to Babylon by two angels. It is thus indicated that guiltiness shall be transferred from Judah to Babylon.

(8) *The Messenger Chariots of Jehovah again* (vi. 1–8).—In the first vision it was evening, and the returned messengers brought in their report to Jehovah; now, in the eighth vision, it is morning, and the angelic charioteers set out to the four quarters of the earth to carry out the things decreed in the previous visions, and especially to execute vengeance on Babylon ("the north country," *v.* 8).

C. *Confirmatory Appendix* (vi. 9 to viii.).—In an appendix two events are narrated which serve to emphasise and confirm the prophet's predictions of the nearness of a better day.

Chapter vi. 9–15. Certain of the Jews still resident in Babylon had brought an offering of silver and gold. This the prophet was commanded to make into crowns and place upon the head of Joshua the high priest; he was to declare him, in a typical sense, the Branch, who should "build the Temple of the Lord, and bear the glory, and sit upon his throne." The crowns were then to be laid up in the Temple as a memorial of the donors. It is probable that the text is corrupt, and that Zerubbabel was crowned as well as Joshua: hence "crowns" instead of crown in verse 11, and the expression "between them both" in verse 13.

Chapters vii., viii.—In 518 B.C. messengers came from Babylon to ask if they should still observe the mournful fasts which had been instituted to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem. Zechariah replied, in words worthy of the old prophets, to the effect that fasts and feasts in themselves were neither pleasing nor displeasing to the Almighty, who desired justice and mercy and obedience; but in token of the blessings in store for the restored nation Jehovah bids them henceforth change their fasts into feasts. Zechariah's work ends with the beautiful passage in which he foretells the time when the inhabitants of one Gentile city shall say to another, "Let us go speedily to intreat the favour of the Lord of hosts: I will go also;"—when "ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

II. Zechariah I.—*The Work of another Prophet, probably also named Zechariah* (perhaps Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah mentioned in Isaiah viii. 2), consisting of chapters ix.–xi., and also xiii. 7–9. Probable date of the prophet's activity *circa* 750–730.

There can be no manner of doubt that chapters ix.–xi. are

by a different and much earlier writer, and it seems highly probable that xiii. 7–9, which in its present position has no connection with the context, ought to follow chapter xi. which it completes and explains. We have no longer a prophet trying to inspirit a feeble remnant, but one who rebukes a nation nearing its doom. When Zechariah II.—as for brevity's sake we may call him—lived, two centuries had elapsed since the captivity of the ten tribes, whereas in chapters ix.–xi. they still inhabit the land (ix. 10, etc.). The Assyrian Power had practically vanished in 520, but when Zechariah I. wrote it was evidently at the height of its pride and prosperity (x. 11, etc.). It would be quite impossible to have written of Assyria and Egypt at the time of the return from exile as the prophet writes in ix. 10 and 11. We are sure, therefore, that the bulk of the prophecy was written long before the time of the author of chapters i.–viii. And we can arrive very nearly at the exact date. The ten tribes still inhabited the land, but Tiglath-Pileser had already depopulated north and north-east Galilee, as we gather from the promise that the exiles shall be restored to Gilead and Lebanon (x. 10). It was, further, about the time (735) when the final rupture took place between the ten tribes and Judah, when "the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" was "broken" (xi. 14). The rulers of the northern kingdom were wicked and despicable, and succeeded one another in rapid succession—a description which can only refer to the period which followed the death of Jeroboam II. in 746, when in the course of thirteen years no less than six kings ascended the throne of Israel. God declares by the prophet in xi. 8, "I cut off three shepherds (*i.e.* princes) in one month, for My soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed Me." Shallum and Menahem were, we know, both murdered in one month, and were we familiar with the minute details of that period we should probably discover that another leader of Israel fell at the same time, and that it is to this bloody period the passage alludes. All these facts point to the same conclusion. The prophecy ix.–xi. and xiii. 7–9 was written between the depopulation of north Galilee and the

final captivity of the ten tribes, that is, between the years 734 and 722 B.C. As we gather from xi. that the prophet, though himself belonging to Judah, had for many years endeavoured to act as a spiritual shepherd to Israel, we probably shall not be far wrong if we date his ministry as extending, roughly speaking, from 750 to 730. He thus lived in the days of Amos and Hosea and during the earlier part of Isaiah's career.

Against this conclusion one fact may be alleged. The Greeks are alluded to in ix. 13 as a world-power, and as a menace to the people of Palestine. They could not have been so described in the eighth century B.C., nor indeed in the sixth, and not till Alexander the Great's conquest in the East in 332. This one difficulty, however, must not be allowed to outweigh the many evidences on the other side. We must rather ascribe it to a copyist's mistake, or an interpolation, or the adaptation of an ancient prophecy to existing circumstances in a later age.

The confusion of the later prophet with the earlier may be accounted for by identity of name, for Zechariah is one of the commonest of Hebrew appellations, occurring in the Bible no less than twenty-eight times. There is, in fact, as Bertholdt and others have pointed out, a "faithful witness" mentioned by Isaiah in connection with the very subject with which our prophet deals, namely, the destruction of the northern kingdom (viii. 1–4), whose name was Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah; and if he was the prophet who wrote ix.–xi., etc., nothing is more natural than that in after ages he should be confounded with the Zechariah the son of Berechiah (Zech. i. 1), who wrote i.–viii.

Contents of ix.–xi. and xiii. 7–9.

Chapters ix., x. *The Bright Future.*—A great Power (Assyria) is pursuing its conquests from north to south. Its might will be felt by Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. But Jehovah will encamp about Jerusalem and save it, and this approaching deliverance brings near to the prophet the days of Messiah, whose advent as the meek and gentle

King of Peace is beautifully described (ix. 9, 10). The symbolism then changes; the prophet predicts the return of the prisoners (carried off by Tiglath-Pileser), etc., and pictures the united nations of Israel and Judah, with Jehovah at their head, going forth conquering and to conquer (ix. 11–17). Let Judah, then, repent and forsake her idolatrous practices, for God will punish her sinful leaders, and then she shall be as Jehovah's noble war-horse, treading down His enemies (x. 1-6). Israel (Ephraim) also shall be strengthened, the captives shall return and reoccupy the depopulated regions of Gilead and Lebanon, and the oppressors, Egypt and Assyria, shall be brought low (x. 7–12).

Chapters xi., xiii. 7–9. *The Darkness that must Precede the Dawn.*—The prophet's language suddenly assumes a menacing tone. The preceding section dealt mostly with Judah; this is concerned almost exclusively with Israel. The prophet had now probably laboured for many years among the northern tribes, endeavouring to stem the tide of corruption and to promote harmony between Israel and Judah; and the experience thus gained had at length taught him that only through terrible calamities could the nation be cleansed or the purposes of God fulfilled.

The prophet bids Lebanon open its doors that the cleansing fires may burn through it. He bids the trees howl and the shepherds lament, for the forest shall be laid low and the sheep destroyed by lions. Then the prophet turns to describe the past under the parable of a good shepherd. Jehovah had bidden him tend the flock which had been destined to slaughter and maltreated by cruel pastors (xi. 4–7, R.V.). As Jehovah's vicegerent and representative he watched over the sheep with the utmost tenderness, carrying two staves, one inscribed Beauty and the other Bonds, and had cut off three of the evil shepherds in one month. But soon convinced of the hopelessness of his task, he broke the staff Beauty, as a symbol that God would break His covenant and would not fulfil the promises He had made to Israel. Then the prophet demanded the price of his services as shepherd. Though he

stood as God's representative they offered him only the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver, and this he cast contemptuously to the potter* in the house of the Lord. Next he broke also the staff Bonds as a sign that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel should be broken (xi. 4–17).

Next Jehovah had bidden him act before the people the part of a foolish shepherd, as a token that He would place over Israel a cruel and neglectful ruler (King Pekah); but Jehovah would punish this evil ruler (xi. 15–17). He himself should be slain, the sheep would be scattered, two-thirds of the people would be cut off and die; but the third part should be refined as silver or gold in the fire, and should again turn to the Lord (xiii. 7–9).

The style of Zechariah I. is much more elevated than that of Haggai or Zechariah II.; it resembles that of Isaiah, but does not reach to such heights of sublimity.

III. *The Work of an Anonymous Prophet* xii.–xiv. (excluding xiii. 7–9).

It is impossible to fix with certainty either the date or the occasion of this prophecy. It was subsequent to the captivity of the ten tribes in 722, for clearly the northern kingdom was no longer in existence. It would appear also, from xii. 11, to be subsequent to the death of Josiah at the battle of Megiddo in 609. But beyond this all certainty ceases. Some critics assume that the siege of Jerusalem and escape of a remnant described in the work refer to the final capture of the city by the Chaldæans in 586; others maintain that the prophecy is post-exilic. The former critics base themselves mainly on the allusions to the House of David, as though that referred to some of the kings of Judah. A careful examination of the passages, however, renders this conclusion anything but certain. In xii. 7 the House of David is identified with Jerusalem *in opposition* to the rest of Judah, and no such condition of affairs is to be found in the time of the monarchy. In xii. 12–14, again, the family of David is spoken of as if it were on an equality with the families of Nathan, Levi, the

* The Syriac version has "treasury."

Shimeites, etc.,—it is one "among the families that remain," and this description exactly tallies with the state of things which existed after the Exile. There cannot, therefore, be said to exist any proof of the præ-exilic date.

The condition of Judah depicted by the prophet is unfamiliar. There was evidently in his time a deadly feud between Jerusalem and the rest of Judah (xii. 2, 7; xiv. 14), which was apparently founded upon some great crime committed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The prophet deprecates this feud. There will come a time when the chieftains of Judah shall again see that their interest consists in alliance with Jerusalem (xii. 5), and shall unite with her against the foreigners (xii. 6); and, on the other hand, Jerusalem will at some future day mourn her crime with a great lamentation (xii. 10–13). Another peculiarity is found in the manner in which the prophets are spoken of; they are classed with idols and unclean spirits, and to accuse a man of being a prophet was like accusing him of a crime (xiii. 2–6); and we are thus reminded of Nehemiah's imprecation upon all the prophets of his time in *Nehemiah* vi. 14 (*circa* 440). Two sieges of Jerusalem are spoken of in this section, from one of which the city comes out victorious (xii. 1–6), while in the other the city is captured, and only a remnant are rescued by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah (xiv.); but whether these are allusions to historical events, or are imaginative and symbolical, we do not know. On the whole the prophecy so little fits in with any circumstance known to us that we may with most probability relegate it to one of those periods after the Exile of which no historical records have survived.

While this section must always remain obscure, it contains several passages dear to the Christian Church. The description of the pathetic mourning of Jerusalem for its crime has been applied by common consent to the mourning of Good Friday, when sinners "look on Him whom they have pierced" (xii. 10, 11). The "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness" (xiii. 1), whatever its original significance, is realised only in the effects of the Atonement, and in the

concluding passage (xiv. 16–21) we have expressed, albeit in language highly figurative, the truth that all nations shall yet unite in the worship of the true God; and that only in proportion as nations are true to Him will real prosperity rest upon them.

MALACHI

The greater part of a century had elapsed since the time of Haggai and Zechariah II., *circa* 520. The Captivity was now almost forgotten; the Temple had long been rebuilt, and for several decades the ordinances of the Law had been duly observed. But the flush of enthusiasm which marked the return from Babylon had been followed by a reaction, and this reaction had affected adversely the moral tone of the nation. The punctual observance of the Law had not brought in its train the blessings which had been expected, and the people in consequence became querulous and indifferent to their religious privileges. A new reformation had become necessary, and this was duly effected by Ezra and Nehemiah, who were aided in their work by the prophet Malachi just as Zerubbabel had been helped in his day by the writings of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

The sins rebuked by Malachi are precisely those which were denounced by the two reformers: intermarriage with heathen wives, often after divorcing, on frivolous pretexts, the innocent wives of their youth (ii. 11, 14, 15); offering blemished sacrifices (i. 6–14) and withholding tithes and offerings (iii. 7–12); counting God's service a weariness (i. 13), and so forth. The prophet answers those who denied that God had any special love for His people (i. 1–5), and those who declared that it was vain to serve God, since He made no distinction between the righteous and the wicked (iii. 13 to iv. 3; ii. 17). It is in connection with the latter complaint that the prophet twice foretells the coming of the Messiah to winnow the evil from the good (iii. 1–6; iv. 1–3).

The book closes appropriately with the announcement of the coming of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord (iv. 4–6).

Of the history of the writer of *Malachi* nothing is known. Even the name is disputed, for some take it to be not a proper name, but an appellation. The word Malachi means messenger, and possibly the superscription may be due to the mistaken idea that the "messenger" spoken of in iii. 1 is the prophet himself. As to the approximate date, however, there can be no dispute, for the author of Malachi was certainly a contemporary of Nehemiah. It would seem that the book was written between the first and second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, for the prophet says of the Jews' blemished offering, "Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee?" (i. 8). This must have been some Persian governor, for Nehemiah refused to exact tribute (Neh. v. 14, 15). It would thus appear that *Malachi* was written between 444 and 432 B.C.

The style of *Malachi* is more formal and scholastic than that of the præ-exilic prophets, but it is superior to that of Haggai and the Second Zechariah. Though it does not rise to the level of poetry, "it is pure and beautiful, and has a certain poetic rhythm."* The author's literary method is peculiar; he regularly develops each of his themes by means of question and answer, and generally disposes of objections before he affirms the truth towards which he is working.

Malachi is not the latest book of the Old Testament, but it is the latest book of prophecy, and its position at the end of the Canon is most appropriate. Its motto practically is, "Prepare for the Messiah"; and its closing verses, which predict the work of John Baptist, effectually link it to the Gospels which follow.

* Samuel Cox.

APPENDIX

DATES OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The historical books of the Old Testament for the most part comprise documents of different ages, and have undergone several recensions, so that it is impossible to assign a *single* date to any one of them. For a similar reason no date can be affixed to the books of Psalms and Proverbs, for to name merely the time when they assumed their final form would be quite misleading. These books are therefore omitted from the list which follows.

As regards the prophetical books, it must be borne in mind that the date given is that of the *latest* prophecy uttered by the prophet. The prophet's ministry often covered a long period previous to this date. Thus the book of the First Isaiah is assigned to the year 700, but the earliest vision recorded in it took place nearly forty years earlier:—

Song of Songs. Between 1000 and 900 B.C. (?). (Some critics, however, maintain that it is post-exilic.)
Amos. *Circa* 745.
Hosea. *Circa* 736.
Zechariah I. (ix.–xi., and also xiii. 7–9). *Circa* 730.
Isaiah I. (i.–xxxix.). *Circa* 700.
Micah. *Circa* 700.
Nahum. *Circa* 630. (Certainly between 664 and 607.)
Zephaniah. *Circa* 625.
Job. *Circa* 625 (?). (It is just *possible*, however, that it belongs to the Patriarchal Age.)
Habakkuk. *Circa* 610. (Certainly before 604.)

Jeremiah. *Circa* 588.

The Exile (*i.e. second deportation of Jews*). 588.

Lamentations. *Circa* 580.
Obadiah. *Circa* 580.
Ezekiel. *Circa* 570.
Isaiah II. (xl.–lxvi.). *Circa* 550.

Exile ends. 538.

Haggai. 520.
Zechariah II. (i.–viii.). 518.
Joel. *Circa* 460 (?). (But the date may *possibly* be as early as 830 B.C.)
Jonah. *Circa* 450 (?).
Malachi. *Circa* 440.
Anonymous (Zech. xii.–xiv., excluding xiii. 7–9.) *Circa* 440 (?) Certainly post-exilic.
Esther. *Circa* 300 (?).
Ecclesiastes. *Circa* 200 (?). (Almost certainly between 340 and 200.)
Daniel. *Circa* 167 (?).
Maccabean Psalms. *Circa* 160.

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